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# Musing the Garden: a Poetics of Place and Emplacement.

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**MUSING THE GARDEN:  
A POETICS OF PLACE AND EMPLACEMENT**

**A Dissertation**

**Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the  
Louisiana State University and  
Agricultural and Mechanical College  
in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements of the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy**

**in**

**The Department of Geography and Anthropology**

**by**

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B.S., University of California, 1984  
M.A., California State University, 1994  
August, 1999**



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## ABSTRACT

A walk through a garden is an immersion into a wealth of sensory and relational experiences of place. Plant varieties, color, texture, flowers, forms, pathways, light, benches, ornaments, and other experiential qualities of place work upon one's consciousness to draw one into intimate contact with the place. "Emplacement" is this intimate, immersed engagement with a place, a process and state of being that erodes the boundaries we so often erect between self and environment.

Traditional systematic forms of inquiry, based upon the Cartesian idea of an essential separation between object and subject, are not applicable to the study of emplacement because the detachment of such an inquiry destroys the existential sense of engagement central to emplacement. Knowledge related to emplacement is poetic rather than Cartesian, an intimate kind of knowing that is more apprehending than comprehending.

Existential phenomenology as a methodological approach discloses poetics of place and emplacement in selected American public gardens, addressing not only epistemology, but also poetic ontology, expression, and conceptualization. Poetic knowing is accompanied by an awareness of poetic being, poetic language, and the formation of concepts such as *genius loci* that avoid the consequences of object-subject reductions.

Gardens are particularly poetic, since they are places we enter into intentionally and aesthetically. The pedestrian rate and a scale provide a poetic quality much different from the more prosaic world of busy lifestyles. Public gardens therefore serve as a workshop for the understanding and awareness of poetics and emplacement. According to their styles and to their natural and artistic content, gardens provide an abundance of poetic perceptions and impressions, such as a sense of spaciousness or intimacy, focused or dissipated attention, historical or cultural references, internal and

external context, comprehensibility of orientation, qualities of movement through the garden, tactile experiences, or sensory and bodily involvement. These poetic qualities serve to create an experiential sense of place both unique and shared in the encounter with the garden.

## CHAPTER ONE

### WEAVING A TAPESTRY

Inside the garden gate, a Walker treads the path, looking ahead to a distant house just visible through the trees, and follows the feet on the way ahead, toward azaleas to the left hand, and tulips to the right. A breeze gently brushes by, disturbing hair and noticing skin. The Walker is alone, yet is not. An ethereal companion, the Reader, goes along upon the feet of the other, by means of words, a magic spelled upon the page.

We turn down the path to the left, into the intensity of azaleas in full bloom. The profusion is a rich palette of color afar, while nearby a bush of bright red shows us each flower. Beyond the kiosk where a docent barter smiles and friendly words, lawns, azaleas, and bright sky fling the landscape open. We choose the shade instead, the closeness of the fern dell, further to the left. Overhead, intrepid sunlight wins only occasional battles with conspiring branches and leaves, as the soft path walks by underfoot. Every shade of green clamors for attention: "look, look at me." A creek whispers its way to our ears from some hiding place among the ferns and dogwoods; a sudden mist rises and drifts, to cool the touch and to delight small children across the way. Reading eyes shift from the page to some other vista, and the image of the garden fades, for now.

The descriptive walk in the garden (in this case, the Dallas Botanical Gardens) reveals aspects of place that could not be found in a map of that garden, a description of acreage, or a botanical listing. This is a garden full of sensations, impressions, intangible experiences, and engagement with messy, rich, and solid realities of place. D.W. Meinig, in "The Beholding Eye: Ten Versions of the Same Scene"<sup>1</sup> demonstrates that place has many facets. We could find ten more versions to his same scene without difficulty. This dissertation is predicated on the idea that there are myriad ways to look at a place, each revealing something, but not everything, about places in general and that place in particular. Our understanding of how we relate to the world around us is broadened and strengthened by casting the interpretive net widely to catch glimpses of place from many angles.

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<sup>1</sup> D.W. Meinig, "The Beholding Eye: Ten Versions of the Same Scene," in *The Interpretation of Ordinary Landscapes*, ed. D. W. Meinig (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979).

My version of the garden, above, is meant to evoke poetic images and to disclose engagement with place in a way seldom addressed in geography. My “angle” in this dissertation is “poetics of place,” a concept that roams into the slippery region of the artistic, the experiential, the aesthetic, the relational, the poetic. The result is an approach to knowledge that diverges considerably from typical geographic analyses of space and place. My aim is to elucidate how a poetic approach can contribute to the understanding of encountered places and to exemplify this approach in a poetic study of public gardens, focused by the theme of “emplacement,” our engagement with place, as being-in-the-world.

### Contexts

A dissertation is located within a number of contexts: scholarly, disciplinary, methodological, philosophical, geographical, etc. It also can create some of its own contexts, within the process and expression of the work itself. In the poetic spirit that is the pre-eminent theme of this dissertation, I have chosen a framework for these issues that I hope will emphasize the creative whole rather than the analytical parts. This framework is found in the meaning underlying the term “context” itself. In written or spoken communication, a phrase may be taken out of context or placed in context--the larger meaningful whole in which it belongs as communication, perhaps a paragraph, chapter, or conversation. More generally, context is the situation or circumstance of an event or idea: again the whole in which it belongs. “Context” derives from the Latin *contextus*, meaning a sequence of words, or coherence. This in turn comes from the verb *contexere*, meaning to weave, or to join together.<sup>2</sup>

Context is therefore a weaving of strands together into a whole greater than its parts.

<sup>2</sup> Walter W. Skeat, *The Concise Dictionary of English Etymology* (Ware, Hertfordshire, England: Wordsworth Reference, 1993); William Morris, ed., *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*, New College Edition (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1980).

A dissertation is such a weaving, a stringing-together of words, within the context of the larger word-stringing project that is academic scholarship. It is often a painstaking work of separating the strands of the weaving to understand how they come together, and to explain each comprising strand. For this particular dissertation, the sense of the whole, the tapestry, is the primary focus, so that the individual strands fade into the creation of the weaving. The strands of context within the dissertation, and within this introduction to the dissertation, should retreat into the coalescence of the fabric. In a wider context, this dissertation is intended to be a strand in a bigger whole that is the poetics of place, within the tapestry of being. With this larger poetic image of the tapestry in mind, I consider here some of the strands of context of the study.

### **The Context of Fieldwork**

In this poetics-of-place tapestry the places themselves comprise the first strand of context. It is essential to the spirit of this dissertation that it be “emplaced,” and not a detached, abstract theoretical argument; for “poetics of place,” as I use the phrase, concerns the connection with places that is inherent to our being, and a reconnection that can poetically enrich such emplaced being-in. The starting point, then, is necessarily the places in which we are. For the dissertation study, I selected one type of place--public gardens--and numerous instances of that type. As the text of any dissertation must proceed in a linear manner, the theoretical-philosophical treatment of “poetics of place” in chapter two precedes the application of those ideas to the gardens used as examples in later chapters. In the research process, however, these theoretical concerns did not come first, but arose out of my experiences in the gardens. Textually, those experiences can be expressed only after building a vocabulary with which to share them.

The garden, and the gardens, are the experiential aspect of my dissertation: while poetics and emplacement are about experience, the garden is where the experience is. Poetics, emplacement, and phenomenology all have to be *about* something, unless they are to be mere abstraction. Poetics achieves its effectiveness through poetic images that bring into focus the abstract by allusion to the concrete. I have chosen to “ground” the poetics, the emplacement, and the phenomenology of this study with a collection of places (and therefore a type of experience of place) called “the garden.”

The garden is a place that we enter into intentionally; we go to the garden to experience it. This makes the garden a good workshop for an exploration of the poetics of place, because these are places that are expected to be poetic. They embody a sense of art, of beauty, of aesthetics, and of experience, but also a relationship. This relationship that is the garden is between human and earth, an ideal landscape of our being with nature, the best form of this relationship we can come up with. This ideal is not always the same, varying through time and across space (see chapter three). The relational quality of the garden correlates with the relational aspects of poetics and emplacement, so that the garden is a good place to look for these things. A garden is also a good place to go looking for poetics because it is a pedestrian place. Much of the daily detachment from place occurs as our technology separates us from the earth: as we drive to work in metal boxes on wheels, as we obtain our food from giant, anonymous corporate machines, as we form our sense of the world from the morass of messages blaring over the telecommunications networks.<sup>3</sup> In the garden we step out of the rushed confines of modernist technology, onto the ground at a pace that allows time to smell the roses. We find place immediately before us.

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<sup>3</sup> Edward Relph, *Place and Placelessness* (London: Pion, 1976); James Howard Kunstler, *The Geography of Nowhere: The Rise and Decline of America's Man Made Landscape* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1993).

The dissertation fieldwork entailed visiting a variety of public gardens, as visited places, in seven states across the country, between 1995 and 1998. I have not included private home gardens in the study, except where they have been transferred to foundations and opened to the public. The fieldwork sites are listed in full in the Appendix, by region and by garden type. Their purpose has been twofold: first to provide an environment for phenomenological reflection on the poetics of gardens and of place during the research phase of the dissertation, and second to serve as a pool of poetic images from which to draw illustrations of the concepts and themes of the dissertation. These poetic garden images reflect not only abstract concepts, but also the poetic experience of gardens as individual places. Although I have included a wide variety of public gardens from different regions in order to broaden the base of poetic experiences from which to gather ideas about gardens and about how we relate to place, this collection of gardens is not intended as any sort of representative or statistical sample. My purpose is not to explain the gardens, nor to compare or contrast them, but rather to bring their images into the tapestry, phenomenologically and poetically (see chapters four and five). The fieldwork was therefore a process of listening to what the landscapes and places have to say for themselves, or attending to “a world that speaks,”<sup>4</sup> not of applying hypotheses, seeking historical or social causes, analyzing designers’ intentions, nor of canvassing the attitudes, opinions, and behaviors of other people in these places. It is a matter of attending to, or phenomenologically “intending,” the evocative images of the garden-places, but this does not mean that historical, social, design, attitudinal, or behavioral issues are irrelevant or ignored, for they make up part of the tapestry of the poetics of place. These issues are, however, addressed poetically, not causally, according to the methods of phenomenology and of

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<sup>4</sup> Miles Richardson, “Looking at a World That Speaks,” in *Re-Reading Cultural Geography*, ed. Kenneth E. Foote, Peter J. Hugill, Kent Mathewson, and Jonathan M. Smith (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1994).



Bachelard's applied poetics, as detailed in chapter two. It is necessary to set aside the paradigm of scholarship as the explanation of causality in order to address the poetic knowledge that lies outside that paradigm.

### The Context of Methodology

My method in approaching both the garden fieldwork and the exposition of the idea "poetics of place" is phenomenological, a method that has much in common with poetry's role in disclosing ordinary aspects of world and life by fostering an extraordinary view of them (see chapter two). What is phenomenology? Although the term is used in different ways, phenomenology is in general a method for studying things as they appear. A phenomenon, from the Greek φαίνομενον (*phainomenon*), is something that appears, or "that which shows itself," while λογος (*logos*) is "speaking" to this phenomenon and also letting its own voice out, to bring it into the light of awareness.<sup>5</sup> The fundamental maxim of phenomenology, "to the things themselves" (*zu den Sachen selbst*),<sup>6</sup> brings the interpreter back, again and again, to the lived-world with which the experiential is necessarily bound. The phenomenologist is to set aside, to the extent possible, theoretical structures that we habitually interpose between observer and observed like a filter. Without the interfering theories, one can be receptive to what is presented by the phenomena themselves. For example, a sunset shows itself as the sun sinking down below the horizon, an event accompanied by a multitude of poetic associations. We "know," however, that the sun does not really go down: rather we move out of its line of sight because of the rotation of the earth. This a scientific stance, which interposes scientific theory between my seeing and the sunset

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<sup>5</sup> Martin Heidegger, *The History of the Concept of Time: Prolegomena*, trans. Theodore Kisiel (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1985) [from his lectures in 1925], 81.

<sup>6</sup> Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1962 [1927]); Edmund Husserl, *Logical investigations* (London: Routledge and K. Paul; New York: Humanities Press, 1970).

itself, and in the process it invalidates my perception that the sun sets. The scientific stance is useful for gaining explanatory knowledge, but not for revealing poetic experience. Poetically, the sun does indeed set, as we experience it. Phenomenology provides a method to seek a kind of knowledge distinct from that addressed by the scientific method or by other methods such as deconstruction. Poetically, the concern is not the cause of the objective event which makes the sun appear to set.

Phenomenology is a method by which one returns, receptively, to the precognitive world in which we habitually act and exist, a world in which the sun does set.

Merleau-Ponty describes this phenomenological returning:<sup>7</sup>

To return to the things themselves is to return to that world which precedes knowledge, of which knowledge always *speaks*, and in relation to which every scientific schematization is an abstract and derivative sign-language, as is geography in relation to the countryside in which we have learnt beforehand what a forest, a prairie or a river is.

What phenomenology does, in bringing the everyday into awareness in a manner that fosters a connection with the world of life, or “lifeworld,” is very similar to what poetry does, using turns of language to reveal what can be the most ordinary, unnoticed things. Phenomenology is therefore an appropriate method for the study of poetics of place or space, as argued by Bachelard, and for the poetic study of gardens.<sup>8</sup> My choice of phenomenology as method was not, however, a matter of going out to find an appropriate way of studying poetics; it was instead the discovery of a language that spoke to the impulses of research already at work within me. As Edward Relph observed in his methodological essay, “Seeing, Thinking, Describing”: “the philosophies and methods I use seemed to choose me.”<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. Colin Smith (London and New York: Routledge, 1962 [1945]), ix.

<sup>8</sup> Gaston Bachelard, *La Poétique de L'Espace* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1958).

<sup>9</sup> Edward Relph, “Seeing, Thinking, and Describing Landscapes,” in Thomas Saarinen et al (eds), *Environmental Perception and Behavior* (Chicago: University of Chicago, Department of Geography,

Merleau-Ponty makes a similar statement, as he considers the meaning of “phenomenology”:<sup>10</sup>

It is less a question of counting up quotations than of determining and expressing in concrete form this *phenomenology for ourselves* which has given a number of present-day readers the impression, on reading Husserl or Heidegger, not so much of encountering a new philosophy as of recognizing what they had been waiting for.

Phenomenology as a method is therefore personal as well as professional, a means of returning the mind and the spirit to what is already known.

Phenomenology, along with poetics, has provided me with a vocabulary to express the relational aspects of place, world, and earth that drive my research. This relational emphasis threads through the various themes of the dissertation, including the theme of emplacement, the quality of immersed, engaged being-in-place. It is a theme whose *logos* is drawn out by phenomenology in a way that is not possible with methods based on paradigms of detachment rather than engagement.

### **The Context of Academic Scholarship**

The dissertation’s context of scholarship includes its place within the discipline of geography and in a wider interdisciplinary environment, as well as a review of pertinent literature within the body of scholarship. Considering first the context of the discipline of geography, my topic falls within one of the main geographic themes: human-land interrelations.<sup>11</sup> I take this theme in a direction very different from the contemporary poststructuralist rendition of it as “nature-society relations,” in which nature is interpreted as social construction and as ideological narrative.<sup>12</sup> The

Research Paper No. 209, 1985), 212.

<sup>10</sup> Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, viii.

<sup>11</sup> Preston E. James and Geoffrey J. Martin, *All Possible Worlds: A History of Geographical Ideas*, second ed. (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1981); William L. Thomas, “The Pacific Coast of North America, As Viewed from the Pacific,” *Yearbook of the Association of Pacific Coast Geographers* 41 (1979).

<sup>12</sup> E.g. Cindi Katz and Andrew Kirby, “In the Nature of Things: The Environment and Everyday Life,” *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 16 (1991); Judith Gerber, “Beyond

phenomenology of place and landscape has been touched upon within the tradition of so-called “humanistic geography,”<sup>13</sup> but the application of term “humanism” in geography, criticized by Meinig and Relph as an inaccurate label,<sup>14</sup> has since broadened in use to include any approach to geography not positivistic, therefore losing its usefulness as a category. My work is humanistic in the sense that it is of the humanities (within a discipline that is more often classified as a social or physical science), and in the general sense that includes phenomenology under the rubric “humanistic,” but it is also not humanistic, in that I strive to avoid giving human beings a position higher than other beings such as the spirits of place. The label of humanism thus turns out to be another problematic at best.

Within the discipline of geography, however, my work does not fit another common category better than the “humanistic” cluster, since phenomenological work has been so categorized. This is an approach and a category of geography that seems to be waning within the discipline, unfortunately. Buttimer observes that while phenomenology may have little rank today within the “fleeting fashions of disciplinary orthodoxy” in geography, “eclipsed by movements in historical materialism, feminism and deconstruction,” this is a matter of fashion rather than relevance, and that phenomenological research has found “a warmer welcome in fields such as

Dualism--The Social Construction of Nature *and* the Natural Construction of Human Beings,” *Progress in Human Geography* 21 (1997).

<sup>13</sup> E.g. Yi Fu Tuan, “Humanistic Geography,” *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 66, no. 2 (June, 1976); D.W. Meinig, “Geography as an Art,” *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 8 (1983); Edward Relph, “An Inquiry into the relations Between Phenomenology and Geography,” *Canadian Geographer* 14 (1970): 193-201; Anne Buttimer, “Grasping the Dynamism of Lifeworld,” *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 66, no. 2 (June, 1976); David Ley and Marwyn S. Samuels, eds., *Humanistic Geography: Prospects and Problems* (Chicago: Maaroufa Press, 1978).

<sup>14</sup> Meinig, “Geography as an Art”; Edward Relph, “Commentary: Humanism, Phenomenology, and Geography,” *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 67, no. 1 (March, 1977); Edward Relph, *Rational Landscapes and Humanistic Geography* (London: Croon Helm, 1981; Totowa, NJ: Barnes & Nobles Books, 1981).

architecture, medicine and environmentally sustainable development.”<sup>15</sup> Relph’s suggested alternative term “experiential geography” may be better; it is used by Pocock in one of the few recent explicitly phenomenological geographic studies.<sup>16</sup>

With limited work in the phenomenology of place and environment within geography, this dissertation has become an interdisciplinary work, a tendency that complements the relational-integrational quality of poetic place and emplacement. No body of work brings together all the themes I am working with here: place, poetics, emplacement, phenomenology, and the garden. Therefore, instead of working forward from an established body of scholarship, I have drawn widely from works that touch upon the various themes, seeking to bring them together into a poetic whole.

“Place” has been a common theme in geography, and place as experiential has been explored by geographers, particularly in regard to the concept “sense of place.” Yi-Fu Tuan’s work stands out in this field, as his ground-breaking *Topophilia: A Study of Environmental Perception, Attitudes, and Values* was followed by other works on the experiential geography of place, including his *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience*, and *Landscapes of Fear*.<sup>17</sup> Relph’s *Place and Placelessness* concerns being out of place as well as in place, and Donald Meinig’s volume *The Interpretation of Ordinary Landscapes* includes a number of excellent essays by geographers on the places before our eyes.<sup>18</sup> Entrikin’s *The Betweenness*

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<sup>15</sup> Anne Buttimer, “Classics in Human Geography Revisited: Author’s Response,” *Progress in Human Geography* 18, no. 4 (1994): 504-506.

<sup>16</sup> Douglas Pocock, “Place Evocation: The Galilee Chapel in Durham Cathedral,” *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 21 (1996).

<sup>17</sup> Yi-Fu Tuan, *Topophilia: A Study of Environmental Perception, Attitudes, and Values* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1974); Yi-Fu Tuan, *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience* (Minneapolis, Minn.: University of Minnesota Press, 1977); Yi-Fu Tuan, *Landscapes of Fear* (New York: Pantheon, 1979).

<sup>18</sup> Edward Relph, *Place and Placelessness* (London: Pion, 1976); D. W. Meinig, ed., *The Interpretation of Ordinary Landscapes* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979).

of *Place* is a theoretical-philosophical treatment of place as it confounds our tendency toward dualistic thinking.<sup>19</sup>

While many of these works have been influenced by phenomenology, there have also been works on place, within and beyond geography, that are more explicitly phenomenological. In *Dwelling, Place, and Environment: Towards a Phenomenology of Person and World*, David Seamon and Robert Mugerauer collect essays on phenomenology of place from scholars in geography, philosophy, architecture, psychology, religious studies, music, and city planning, later followed by a sequel, *Dwelling, Seeing, and Designing*, edited by Seamon.<sup>20</sup> Philosopher Mugerauer also considers issues and theoretical possibilities in *Interpretations on Behalf of Place*, while Edward Casey connects anthropology with “phenomenological topoanalysis” in “How to Get from Space to Place in a Fairly Short Stretch of Time: Phenomenological Prolegomena.”<sup>21</sup> Architect Christian Norberg-Schulz’s *Genius Loci: Towards a Phenomenology of Architecture* treats place as both natural and built.<sup>22</sup>

As for “poetics of place,” a phrase I adopted from Miles Richardson’s seminar by that name, he approaches it from an ethnographic point of view in “Poetics in the Field and on the Page” and “Writing Poetry and Doing Ethnography.”<sup>23</sup> Anne

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<sup>19</sup> J. Nicholas Entrikin, *The Betweenness of Place: Towards a Geography of Modernity* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1991).

<sup>20</sup> David Seamon and Robert Mugerauer, *Dwelling, Place, and Environment: Towards a Phenomenology of Person and World* (New York and Oxford: Columbia University Press Morningside, 1985); David Seamon, ed., *Dwelling, Seeing, and Designing: Toward a Phenomenological Ecology* (Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 1993).

<sup>21</sup> Robert Mugerauer, *Interpretations on Behalf of Place: Environmental Displacements and Alternative Responses* (Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 1994); Edward S. Casey, “How to Get from Space to Place in a Fairly Short Stretch of Time: Phenomenological Prolegomena,” in Steven Feld and Keith H. Basso, eds., *Senses of Place* (Santa Fe, New Mexico: School of American Research Press).

<sup>22</sup> Christian Norberg-Schulz, *Genius Loci: Towards a Phenomenology of Architecture* (New York: Rizzoli, 1980).

<sup>23</sup> Miles Richardson, “Poetics in the Field and On the Page,” *Qualitative Inquiry* 4, no. 4 (1998); Miles Richardson, “Writing Poetry and Doing Ethnography: Aesthetics and Observation on the Page

Buttimer discusses *poesis* as one of the four “constellations of vocational meaning” in geography, in her *Geography and the Human Spirit*.<sup>24</sup> Louise Chawla studies the connections among nature, poetry, and memory, using phenomenological psychology, in her work *In the First Country of Places*.<sup>25</sup> I have drawn most heavily, however, from Gaston Bachelard’s *The Poetics of Space*<sup>26</sup> in my treatment of the poetics of place (see chapter two). I use the phrase in a manner that is necessarily linked with phenomenology and emplacement, starting with encountered landscape and place, so that the many uses of the term poetics in textual criticism or semiotics do not apply here.

Much has been written on garden design and garden history but little that is phenomenologically poetic. Moore, Mitchell, and Turnbull do make connections among the garden, forms, and genius of place in *The Poetics of Gardens*.<sup>27</sup> Mara Miller interprets *The Garden as an Art*, while Gail Harvey and Liz Trovato present a collections of illustrated quotations, both poetry and prose, in *The Lover of Gardens*.<sup>28</sup> Susan Stewart interprets the garden of Scottish poet Ian Hamilton Finlay in “Garden Agon.”<sup>29</sup> Paula Deitz considers the works of three writers, including Nathaniel Hawthorne, responding to the Celia Thaxter’s garden on Appledore Island, and in the Field,” *Anthropology and Humanism* 19, no. 1 (1994).

<sup>24</sup> Anne Buttimer, *Geography and the Human Spirit* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), 15.

<sup>25</sup> Louise Chawla, *In the First Country of Places: Nature, Poetry, and Childhood Memory* (Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 1994).

<sup>26</sup> Bachelard, *La Poétique de L'Espace*; Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, trans. Maria Jolas (Boston: Beacon Press, 1969).

<sup>27</sup> Charles W. Moore, William J. Mitchell, and William Turnbull, Jr., *The Poetics of Gardens* (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1988).

<sup>28</sup> Mara Miller, *The Garden as an Art* (Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 1993); Gail Harvey, compiler and Liz Trovato, design, *The Lover of Gardens* (Avenel, New Jersey: Gramercy Books and Outlet Book Company, 1993).

<sup>29</sup> Susan Stewart, “Garden Agon,” *Representations* 62 (Spring 1998).

Maine, in “The Poetics of the American Garden.”<sup>30</sup> A collection of small volumes in Simon & Schuster’s “Library of Garden Detail” poetically considers different elements of the garden, including *The Garden Gate*, by Rosemary Very, and *The Garden Wall*, by Mirabel Osler.<sup>31</sup> James Elkins postulates, in “On the Conceptual Analysis of Gardens,” that writing on gardens has tended to take on a meandering, associative quality that results from the tendency of the gardens themselves to induce a contemplative, holistic frame of mind.<sup>32</sup> This dissertation may support that thesis, as I have striven to create a work of musing that is more revery than explication.

I adopted the term “emplacement,” by which I mean an engaged immersion in place, from Edward Casey’s essay noted above,<sup>33</sup> but I have not found it used elsewhere. There are, however, a number of expressions of similar concepts, from a variety of perspectives. Martin Heidegger’s phenomenological idea of “being-in-the-world” (*In-der-Welt-Sein*) is foundational for the development of the idea in existential phenomenology, carried forward by those such as Maurice Merleau-Ponty in *The Phenomenology of Perception*.<sup>34</sup> Being-in-the-world is applied specifically to place and environment by David Abram in *The Spell of the Sensuous* and by Arnold Berleant in *Art and Engagement* and *The Aesthetics of Environment*.<sup>35</sup> These

<sup>30</sup> Paula Deitz, “The Poetics of the American Garden,” *Design Quarterly* (Spring 1993).

<sup>31</sup> Rosemary Very, *The Garden Gate*, The Library of Garden Detail (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1991); Mirabel Osler, *The Garden Wall*, The Library of Garden Detail (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1993).

<sup>32</sup> James Elkins, “On the Conceptual Analysis of Gardens,” *Journal of Garden History* 13, no. 4 (Winter 1993).

<sup>33</sup> Casey, “How to Get from Space to Place.”

<sup>34</sup> Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1962 [1927]); Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. Colin Smith (London and New York: Routledge, 1962 [1945]); see also, e.g., William Luijpen, *Existential Phenomenology* (Pittsburgh, Penn.: Duquesne University Press, 1960); James M. Edie, ed., *New Essays in Phenomenology: Studies in the Philosophy of Experience* (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1969).

<sup>35</sup> David Abram, *The Spell of the Sensuous: Perception and Language in a More-Than-Human World*, (New York: Vintage, 1997); Arnold Berleant, *Art and Engagement* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1991); Arnold Berleant, *The Aesthetics of Environment* (Philadelphia: Temple



phenomenological works are the closest to my own, but there are other similar formulations as well. Yi-Fu Tuan links aesthetics and the senses with landscapes in *Passing Strange and Wonderful*.<sup>36</sup> From a standpoint of religious philosophy, Martin Buber develops a relational ethic in *I and Thou*.<sup>37</sup> Within the field of deep ecology, Warwick Fox formulates it as “transpersonal” in *Toward a Transpersonal Ecology: Developing New Foundations for Environmentalism*.<sup>38</sup> From depth psychology we have James Hillman’s works, including *Re-Visioning Psychology*, and Thomas Moore’s *Re-Enchantment of Everyday Life*.<sup>39</sup> Art therapist Shaun McNiff portrays a world full of things that are all animated by “earth angels” in *Earth Angels: Engaging the Sacred in Everyday Things*.<sup>40</sup> This brings up similar ideas in animistic religions and from Eastern philosophies of vital energy to be found everywhere, such as the Chinese concept of *chi*, found in the philosophical system *feng shui*, or the Indian concept of *prana*. All of these are different ways of formulating the idea of an intimate, engaged relationship with earth, environment, or place.

### The Context of Knowledge

As I indicated above, and as I will elaborate in more detail in chapter two, phenomenology is a method that addresses a different kind of knowledge than do traditional forms of scholarship based on objectivity, subjectivity, or causality. We

University Press, 1992).

<sup>36</sup> Yi-Fu Tuan, *Passing Strange and Wonderful: Aesthetics, Nature, and Culture* (Washington, D.C., Covelo, Calif.: Island Press, Shearwater Books, 1993).

<sup>37</sup> Martin Buber, *I and Thou* (New York: Macmillan Collier Books, 1958).

<sup>38</sup> Warwick Fox, *Toward a Transpersonal Ecology: Developing New Foundations for Environmentalism* (Boston and London: Shambhala, 1990).

<sup>39</sup> James Hillman, *Re-Visioning Psychology* (New York: HarperPerennial, 1975); Thomas Moore, *The Re-Enchantment of Everyday Life* (New York: HarperCollinsPublishers, 1996)

<sup>40</sup> Shaun McNiff, *Earth Angels: Engaging the Sacred in Everyday Things* (Boston: Shambhala, 1995).

have been trained to think within the paradigm of the subject-object duality, and our language is structured to complement this paradigm, creating challenges for the present dissertation as I seek to step out into a different paradigm. One of the main obstacles, in the context of writing and reading this sort of dissertation, is that the vocabulary of the English language is insufficient to the task. The struggle with language therefore spans the entire dissertation, in the effort to express ideas that are on the semantic margin, thus also on the edge of the thought so intimately tied to that language. One way this comes across is that I have varied the use of “voice” within the dissertation, using the traditional impersonal language of academic writing (“it”), along with the first person (“I” or “we”), and the neutral but awkward “one” (e.g., “one walks into the garden”). The impersonal connotes objectivity and the first person connotes subjectivity, so that either choice will tend to support the paradigm I’m trying to escape. I have attempted to balance into a neutral voice not readily available in this language. “One” comes the closest, so I have used it when possible, but it does not always fit easily into English, as for example it would in the French with the neutral pronoun “*on*.” The same difficulty arises with words like “thing” and “it,” which connote objects, and on occasion I have used a more personal pronoun to subvert this tendency. Place as “she” interrupts our tendency toward automatic objectification. Another device to shock words out of their habitual meaning is the hyphen, used to join or separate words, as with Heidegger’s “being-in,” or with “dis-cover” to bring out the original sense related to “cover.” These “tricks” are used purposely to upset the habitual, unreflective use of language, an aim that parallels the role of both phenomenology and poetics in fostering awareness of the ordinary (see chapter two).

Poetic knowledge is not entirely revolutionary, however: it has its place within the wider sweep of scholarly pursuits. Anne Buttmer, in her seminal *Geography and*

*the Human Spirit*, outlines a fourfold typology of vocational meaning in geography that creates a context for poetic knowledge within the discipline. The imaginative, creative knowledge of poetics (“*poesis*”) complements the impulses of systematic learning (“*logos*”), education (“*paideia*”), and applied knowledge (“*ergon*”).<sup>41</sup>

### **The Context of Order**

Following this introductory tapestry of context, Chapter Two, “Poetics and Poetic Knowing,” is a theoretical and philosophical consideration of the idea “poetics of place,” including treatment of definition, of Bachelard’s poetics, of the subject-object paradigm, and of poetic being and knowing. In Chapter Three, “The Garden,” I take up the question of the garden as a type of place: its definition, history, and general poetics. Chapter Four, “Garden Emplacement and Poetics,” brings these more abstract ideas down to the ground, with descriptions of gardens from my fieldwork, to tie the themes of poetics and emplacement to these tangible, experienced places. In Chapter Five, “Longwood Gardens,” I explore one garden, the Longwood Gardens of southeastern Pennsylvania, in more depth in order to evoke the sense of poetics in that one place. Finally, Chapter Six, “Poetic Musings,” is a collection of short essays that bring together many of the themes of emplacement, the garden, and poetics of place. It is not a conclusion in the traditional sense, as the poetics that a place speaks cannot be distilled into an analytic end-product; rather it is a reflective attempt to participate in the poetic logos of the places that continue to speak past the end of any finite study. Finally, the Appendix contains a list of all the gardens included in the fieldwork, sorted by region and also by type, with dates and acreage where available.

### **The Context of the Muse**

The final strand in this tapestry of contexts returns to the beginning: the title of the dissertation. I am tempted to define each word here and now, but the desire to hold

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<sup>41</sup> Buttimer, *Geography and the Human Spirit*.

true to the poetic nature of the dissertation, which is to be evocative rather than definitive, holds me back. This issue of definition returns, hauntingly, throughout the dissertation, and I have not been able to avoid it entirely, just as I have not been able to escape completely from the paradigms of subjectivity, objectivity, and causality. I strive to deal with the issues poetically, however, evoking rather than defining, describing rather than explaining. Here enters the importance of the first word of my title: “musing.” “Muse” carries here at least two senses, while hinting at others. To muse is “to ponder or meditate; [to] consider or deliberate at length.”<sup>42</sup> This leads the ponderer toward “thick description,”<sup>43</sup> whether by phenomenology, poetry, or other means, to bring experience more fully into the consciousness of reader and writer, speaker and listener, and whoever wanders places so written.<sup>44</sup> In the second sense, “musing” invokes the Muses, the nine daughters of Zeus and Mnemosyne (“Memory”), goddesses of poetry and knowledge, of word and meaning.<sup>45</sup> Of particular relevance is Thalia, a Grace as well a Muse: she is the Muse of comedy and of pastoral and nature poetry. Her name means “blooming one,” “flourishing one,” and “she who brings flowers.”<sup>46</sup> The garden shows her hand. While Thalia has no publications in refereed journals, her longstanding authority should carry no less weight than invocations of more modern, academic forefathers and foremothers. Perhaps Thalia’s sense of comedy can lend a lightness to the musings of this work, to keep my philosophical ruminations from straying too far from the poetic.

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<sup>42</sup> William Morris, ed., *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1980): 864.

<sup>43</sup> Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays* (New York: Basic Books, 1973).

<sup>44</sup> Elizabeth Drew, *Poetry: A Modern Guide to Its Understanding and Enjoyment* (New York: Dell, 1959).

<sup>45</sup> Morris, ed., *American Heritage Dictionary*; Joseph Campbell, *The Masks of God: Creative Mythology* (New York: Penguin Books, 1969).

<sup>46</sup> Felix Guirand, ed., *Larousse Encyclopedia of Mythology*, trans. Richard Aldington and Delano Ames (London: Batchworth Press Limited, 1959); Campbell, *Creative Mythology*.

## CHAPTER TWO POETICS AND POETIC KNOWING

### Poetics and De-finition

Poetics is more evocative than definitive, and in that spirit I find it more fruitful to evoke an understanding of “poetics of place” than to define it. To define would be simpler and more straightforward, but it would also be a vain attempt to fix and objectify what is by nature variable and non-objective. X. J. Kennedy observes, writing on definition and poetry, that “a trouble with definitions is that they may stop thought.”<sup>1</sup> Once a thing is defined, we may be satisfied too easily that we have understood it, and stop grappling with it.

Neither, however, is it acceptable simply to state that poetics is indefinable and stop there. The grappling must continue. Poetics must be talked around, because it is itself an “arounding” of experience, about extent rather than center, about evocative wandering rather than definitive cores. Poetics is referential, indicative, evocative, incarnative, analogous, and misty, attracted to those very things that are untouched by the fixative knowledge of definition. Poetics is creative of an image, leading the imagination to the margins of knowing, unlike knowledge that is derivative out of the definition or the center of the thing. The knowing of poetics is a knowing that creates, whereas definition is a knowing that derives.

Poetry uses language that is out of the ordinary—old words combined in new ways—to create an experience that is out of the ordinary. A poem, if it is successful, pulls the reader into an awareness of something: of herself, of an idea, of a place, of some image in the poem. The poetic encounter is a jolt of sorts, to shock us out of our habitual thought patterns and to create a new pattern and new experience. Often the

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<sup>1</sup> X. J. Kennedy, *An Introduction to Poetry*, seventh edition. (n.p.: HarperCollinsPublishers, 1990), iii.

new experience is a sensual one, conjured in the imagination with the skillful use of words, bringing us to where one hears the birds, or smells the flowers, or feels the ocean spray upon one's face, even while sitting in a chair looking at the words of the poem. Poetics is a drawing-out, in several senses. Poetic language draws the birds, flowers, or salt spray into awareness, while also drawing the reader out of the armchair into a poetic world, by way of the imagination. Further, some image from everyday life that I encountered yesterday or will encounter tomorrow may be drawn into poetic consciousness because I connect it to an image from the poetry. The quality of poetics as "drawing-out" manifests itself not only in the words of a poet on the page, but also in the poetics of place. Gardens, like some other intentional places such as museums or seashores, are particularly poetic in that they foster the same sort of drawing-out experiences. Ordinary things that we overlook every day can be revealed by coming at them from an atypical angle, in a poem or in a garden.

In the interests of grappling with "poetics," I present here a collage of sorts, a collection of quotations about poetry and poetics that dances around the idea, and an etymological consideration of poetics. This collage foreshadows some of the themes that will be taken up again later in the chapter. Following the collage is a presentation of theoretical ideas on poetics from Gaston Bachelard's *Poetics of Space*, and then five sections that detail a progression of poetic knowing from its break with traditional subjective/objective knowledge and ontology, through an alternative poetic ontology of emplacement and being-in-the-world, to a multi-stage epistemology. The stages of this alternative epistemology are the gathering of knowledge, the expression of knowledge, and the conceptualization of knowledge. The key to poetic gathering of knowledge is apprehending, in contrast with the usual comprehending. Poetic language, which stretches the use of words, addresses the expression of poetic knowledge. Finally,

knowledge of poetics of place and emplacement is conceptualized with the ideas of persona and *genius loci*.

### Arounding Poetics: A Collage

Poets understand that they do not know what they mean, and that this is a source of their strength. . . . writing teaches us to recognize when we have reached the limits of our language, and our knowing, and are dependent on our senses to “know” for us. . . .

We [poets] experience words as steeped in mystery, forces beyond our intellectual grasp. In the late twentieth-century, when speculative knowledge and the technologies it has spawned reign supreme, poets remain dependent on a different form of knowledge, perhaps kin to what Hildegard termed seeing, hearing, and knowing simultaneously.

Kathleen Norris<sup>2</sup>

Norris writes of a “poetic way of knowing” that is entwined with mystery and with not knowing, as the poet sees, hears, and knows all at once. The irony of not knowing as knowing speaks to the departure from the “intellectual grasp,” a crisp understanding of the reality of things that misses the mysterious, sensual ways of what the poet knows she does not know. Poetic knowing requires a letting go, or a loosening of the grasp, upon reaching the limits of that grasp, to fall backward trusting to be caught by senses that are no longer second fiddle to the observing mind. Falling back is not always an easy thing, trusting to be caught, allowing dependence on our senses to “know for us.” The leap can be a rewarding, however: the opening of a window to the “different form of knowledge” upon which poets and other dreamers depend.

The poet’s attitude is something like this: I offer this piece of writing to be read not as prose but as a poem—that is, more perceptively, thoughtfully, and considerately, with more attention to sounds and connotations. . . . Approaching the poem in the anticipation of out-of-the-ordinary knowledge and pleasure. . . . As readers of prose we might seek no more than meaning: no more than what could be paraphrased without serious loss. Meeting any figurative language or graceful turns of word order, we think them pleasant extras. But in poetry all these ‘extras’ matter as much as the paraphraseable content, if not more. For, when we finish reading a good poem, we cannot

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<sup>2</sup> Kathleen Norris, *The Cloister Walk* (New York: Riverhead Books, 1987), 10-11.

explain precisely to ourselves what we have experienced--without repeating, word for word, the language of the poem itself. Archibald MacLeish makes this point memorably in his 'Ars Poetica':

A poem should not mean  
But be.

X.J. Kennedy<sup>3</sup>

The poetic attitude is distinct from the prosaic. It is clear to us how different a poem is from prose, even if poetry is not precisely defined. The poetic is more attentive, more deliberate, giving up for the moment the practical rush of life and the paraphrase of meaning, to notice thoughtfully, to let the senses and the imagination linger considerably upon what cannot be paraphrased.

The same distinction in attitude can be made in regard to life and to how we inhabit places. Prosaically, we distill the practical meaning of traffic patterns, of choices on the grocery store shelves, or of a messy bedroom in need of picking up. We "paraphrase" the plethora of input into a stream of decisions, actions, and reactions, habitually filtering out the "sounds and connotations" and the poetical images all around us. The poetic attitude is a shift of consciousness, approaching a piece of written poetry, or a world full of perceivable poetical, "in anticipation of out-of-the-ordinary knowledge and pleasure."

An essential *doubleness* exists at the heart of poetic creation itself and of any analysis of it. The poet has a twofold nature, as man and as artist; poetry comes from a twofold source--a mysterious inner compulsion and a fully conscious technical discipline; it is a process in which both living and language mingle, in which both meaning and method marry, and in which both visions and revisions play their part.

Elizabeth Drew<sup>4</sup>

Poetical, as an approach to place, permits the interpreter, like the reader of a poem, to hold onto both aspects of the doubleness. Poetical knowledge, the "language,"

<sup>3</sup> Kennedy, *Introduction to Poetry*, 274-275.

<sup>4</sup> Elizabeth Drew, *Poetry: A Modern Guide to its Understanding and Enjoyment* (New York: Dell, 1959), 21.



remains mingled, even enmeshed, with the poetics of the place itself, the “living.” The revision of understanding is not permitted to detach from the original vision of poetic perception, the knowing that happens spontaneously before analytical thought ever imposes its structures of comprehension.

The twofold nature of the poet, as one who lives and as one who speaks, is present as well in one who reads, or sees, poetically. As proposed in the theoretical poetics of Gaston Bachelard, presented later in the chapter, the reader participates in the creativity of the poem to such an extent as to share the joy of the process of poetic creation, as if the reader becomes the poet.

The principal object, then, proposed in these poems was to choose incidents and situations from common life, and to relate or describe them, throughout, as far as was possible in a selection of language really used by men, and, at the same time, to throw over them a certain colouring of imagination, whereby ordinary things should be represented to the mind in an unusual aspect . . .

William Wordsworth<sup>5</sup>

The out-of-the-ordinary knowing is not necessarily, perhaps not even usually, of extraordinary things and events. It throws light upon “incidents and situations from common life,” achieving this light by acting upon the imagination by way of an “unusual aspect.” Poetics is then an extraordinary view of the ordinary, a newness given to old, often forgotten things.

[Wordsworth’s object was] to give the charm of novelty to things of every day, and to excite a feeling analogous to the supernatural, by awakening the mind’s attention from the lethargy of custom, and directing it to the loveliness and the wonders of the world before us, an inexhaustible treasure, but for which, a consequence of the film of familiarity and selfish solicitude we have eyes, yet not see, ears that not hear, and hearts that neither feel nor understand.

Samuel T. Coleridge<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> William Wordsworth, “Preface to the Second Edition of *Lyrical Ballads*,” in *Poets on Poetry*, ed., with Introduction and Notes, Charles Norman (NY: Collier Books, 1962), 138.

<sup>6</sup> Samuel T. Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria*, excerpted in *Poets on Poetry*, ed. Charles Norman, 160. (Regarding Wordsworth’s “*Lyrical Ballads*”).

The “lethargy of custom,” the prosaic going-about of life, is replaced in poetics with an awakening, a “charm of novelty,” in an exercise of directed-towardness that is express in the phenomenological term “intentionality.” Coleridge points to what Wordsworth’s poetry is directed-toward, what it is “intending”: things of the everyday, in their loveliness and wonder. Poetry directs the eye, the ear, the heart, and the full imagination toward what we are usually unable to notice beneath the “film of familiarity,” in the blindness, deafness, and dullness of our habitual mode of activity.

Preceding the quoted passage, Coleridge has proposed two cardinal points of poetry he had frequently discussed with Wordsworth, two “powers” poetry wields. The first is the power of exciting sympathy in the reader, by which must be understood not the greeting-card sentiments of feeling bad on someone’s behalf, but the deeper sense of sympathy as an affinity of emotion, the pathos of “sympathy,” in which the reader enters into the psyche-space of the poem. A poem that works will pull the reader into its world. Coleridge’s second cardinal point is the power of the poem of “giving the interest of novelty by modifying the imagination,” often in the suddenness of a surprisingly sharp poetic image that captures the full attention in its newness.<sup>7</sup>

Under the powers of the poetic attitude, place can become revealed in a novelty belied by its apparent fixed reality. By taking on an “unusual aspect,” the imagination can grasp the emerging poetics of a place and bring the self into a poetic sympathy which reveals ordinary coloring that reason never dreamed of.

[Poets’] language is vitally metaphorical; that is, it marks the before unapprehended relation of things and perpetuates their apprehension.

Percy B. Shelley<sup>8</sup>

To comprehend is to grasp with the mind while, in contrast, to apprehend is to grasp with the senses. Shelley relates these to the “two classes of mental action, which

<sup>7</sup> Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria*, in *Poets on Poetry*, ed. Charles Norman, 159.

<sup>8</sup> Percy B. Shelley, “A Defense of Poetry,” in *Poets on Poetry*, ed. Charles Norman, 182.

are called reason and imagination,” corresponding to the Greek terms *logizein* (λογιζειν), the principle of analysis, and *poiein* (ποιειν), the principle of synthesis.<sup>9</sup> The former understands by taking apart, or analyzing, the latter by putting together, or synthesizing, which is to create. Poetics seeks to point out the unapprehended, i.e., what is not grasped by reason, and to encourage apprehension. It is a call to see things anew.

A poem is an idea caught in the act of dawning.

Robert Frost<sup>10</sup>

A poem should not mean  
But be.

Archibald MacLeish<sup>11</sup>

Poetics deals with a creativity that goes beyond perception to a consideration of ontology, of being. Not only is it a way of seeing and of expressing, but poetics also has a sense of vitality—of being—of its own. The poem catches an idea as it dawns, even to be a dawning itself, ever becoming. The ontology of poetics, its mysterious quality of emergent being, is central to Bachelard’s philosophy of the poetic image. A sense of creativity permeates poetics through its layers, as it creates expression, awareness, and a sense of being. This quality of creativity, of making, goes to the root of the meanings that echo from the word “poetic.”

### Poiesis: Making

“Poetics” comes from “poet” and from the archaic “poesy” (meaning poetry), a form of the Latin *poesis*, for poetry. This was in turn adopted from the Greek ποιησις (*poiesis*), meaning a making, creation, or poem.<sup>12</sup> Artistic creativity is therefore key to the concept, and it intersects with this study at a number of levels.

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<sup>9</sup> Shelley, “A Defense of Poetry,” in *Poets on Poetry*, ed. Charles Norman, 180.

<sup>10</sup> Robert Frost, quoted in Kennedy, *An Introduction to Poetry* (original source not given), 275.

<sup>11</sup> Archibald MacLeish, from “Ars Poetica,” quoted in Kennedy, *Introduction to Poetry*, 273.

<sup>12</sup> Oxford English Dictionary, 2nd ed., 1989.

Making is found in what is poetic, in expressions of the poetic, and in the poetic attitude.

First, the dissertation itself is a making, a creation of words, intended to evoke the poetic aspects of place. Within it are passages that are poetic in a narrower sense: poems and poetic descriptions. The whole of the work, however, is meant to be a creation out of a poetic way of knowing. The writing itself, then, is a first level of poetic making.

Second, place is poetic, made as we give value to our surroundings, as we invest them with meaning through our interactions. While places hold functional meaning and symbolic meaning (Shelley's *logizein*, analysis), they also have a poetic creativity about them. This is a sense of making that is not due to the cause of a human agent (as subject), nor due to some external reality (as object). Instead, this poetic arises in the relation between person and place, engaged by the imagination. Place exhibits this poetic creativeness, Shelley's *poiein*, apart from the rational qualities of place related to *logizein*, the analytic mode of calculation and reason. Bachelard also takes up this theme in his poetic ontology.

In a more conventional kind of making, the garden as a specific type of place is created poetically, much as a poem is created: as an out-of-the-ordinary composition that brings human consciousness into a different mode of awareness. The garden is intentionally aesthetic; in other words, it is a work of art, a thing made for purposes other than the purely pragmatic. Yet the garden is not only made, but poetically remade, as the processes of nature work upon it as much as does the gardener, and as the garden expresses itself, made new in every encounter with it.

These three makings, the dissertation, place, and the garden, are all constructions that produce a thing with poetic qualities. There is **another** kind of poetic

making addressed here which is less tangible, more relational: the creation of poetic awareness, or the practice of poetic knowing. This is not about things poetic, but poetics as an attitude: Coleridge's awakening of the attention, Shelley's apprehension, or Norris' dependence on our senses to know for us. Poetic knowing is the creation of a stance intended to bring awareness of what is poetic, the same stance that is the aim of phenomenology.

### **Gaston Bachelard's Poetics of Space**

Gaston Bachelard takes up a philosophical treatment of poetics in the introduction to *La Poétique de L'Espace (The Poetics of Space)*.<sup>13</sup> He distinguishes a philosophy of the poetic imagination from the traditions of rational scientific philosophy, elucidates the character of the "poetic image" in its own being, argues that phenomenology is the appropriate tool for the study of poetics, and sets the stage for his study of the poetics of the house and other intimate spaces in the remainder of the book. Bachelard's work, although more metaphysical than my study of garden emplacement, is of a similar character, and it provides a theoretical perspective on poetic research.

Bachelard's conviction that an inquiry into poetics is radically different from traditional scientific or rational philosophic research is marked by the tenor of his opening lines in *The Poetics of Space*. Rather than beginning by laying out an explanation of his topic, or by defining what he means by "poetics of space," the author plunges directly into the fundamental departure from habitual methods of investigation which is demanded by the study of the poetic imagination. The call to forget prior learning and to "break with all [the] habits of philosophical research" is likely addressed

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<sup>13</sup> Gaston Bachelard, *La Poétique de L'Espace* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1958); Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, trans. Maria Jolas (Boston: Beacon Press, 1969). Note: where I have cited the French edition, quotations are my own translation.

to himself as much as to the reader, as Bachelard was himself a philosopher of science staunchly committed to objective rationality in that context.<sup>14</sup> He found, however, that the epistemology of science was not applicable to poetics. It must therefore be kept in mind that in drawing a distinction between scientific and poetic inquiry, Bachelard is not hostile to the former. His argument is that objective rationality is simply not appropriate in regard to poetics because they are fundamentally incongruous.

Bachelard explains that the application of a systematic body of knowledge and tested ideas that has been carefully constructed over time, as context with which to comprehend the new matter under study, is a method ineffectual in the case of the poetic image and must be left behind. Instead, one must be receptive, or “present” to the poetic image in the moment it appears: the newness and suddenness of an image, every time the image is encountered, is central. He goes as far as to say that “the notion of principle, the notion of ‘basis’ would be ruinous here.”<sup>15</sup> Bachelard is arguing that scientific epistemology would destroy the ontological essence of the poetic image. This ontology of the poetic image—the vitality, dynamism, and being it has on its own—is at the core of the philosopher’s work in *The Poetics of Space*. Bachelard’s poetic image has its being in its novelty, and this newness means that it has no past.

In maintaining that the poetic image has no past, Bachelard is divorcing the poetic image from systematic theorizing knowledge as a context in which to understand new matters of inquiry, and he is invalidating causality as an organizing epistemological principle in the study of poetics. Because of the creativeness of the image, and because it has a being of its own, it is un-prepared for, un-expected in its newness and its suddenness. The poetic image “escapes” from causality, as a “sudden protrusion from the psyche,” or a “*flambée de l’être*,” a “flaring-up of being.”<sup>16</sup> “The poet does not

<sup>14</sup> Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, xi; Caroline Joan (“Kay”) S. Picart, “Metaphysics in Gaston Bachelard’s ‘Reverie’,” *Human Studies* 20 (1997).

<sup>15</sup> Bachelard, *La Poétique de L'Espace*, 1.

confer the past of his image upon me, and yet his image immediately takes root in me.”<sup>17</sup>

The author proposes that the relation of the poetic image to the past is not causal, but the opposite: “It is not the echo of the past. Rather the inverse: by the thunderclap [*l’éclat*] of an image, the distant past [itself] resounds with echoes.”<sup>18</sup> Bachelard calls this inverse of causality “reverberation” (“*retentissement*”), by which poetry speaks to the depths of the human soul, awakens new depths, and “possesses us entirely.”<sup>19</sup> Poetic reverberation goes beyond the mere sentimental responses by which we connect the poem to various levels of our lives, beyond our hearing of the poem to a point at which we speak the poem, making it our own. The creation of the poetic is thus a reawakening of poetic awareness that moves from the consciousness of the poet into its own ontology and to the depths of the soul of the reader. The poem is not a mere description in words, but an expression that creates being, the archetypal *logos* at an “ontological depth.” The poetic image is no longer considered an object, and it takes us completely out of the realm of objects and objectification, placing us “at the origin of the speaking-being [*l’être parlant*].”<sup>20</sup> Bachelard attributes the transsubjectivity, or intersubjectivity, of the poetic not to causality or objectivity, but to its peculiar ontology.

Poetic reverberation is “smothered” by the objective attitude of criticism, which, Bachelard argues, rejects on principle the ontological depth at which the poetic originates. Causal doctrines are incapable of making any determination on such an ontology. Psychological interpretation, for example (an approach Bachelard had used

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<sup>16</sup> *ibid.*, 1, 2.

<sup>17</sup> Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, xiii.

<sup>18</sup> Bachelard, *La Poétique de L'Espace*, 1-2.

<sup>19</sup> Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, xviii.

<sup>20</sup> Bachelard, *La Poétique de L'Espace*, 7.

before), inevitably loses the reverberations amid the intellectualization of the poetic image and the attempt to force it into contexts. Such interpretation “translates [the image] into a language other than the poetic logos,” and these languages may be considered mutually unintelligible.<sup>21</sup> It is phenomenology, Bachelard insists, that can bring out the novelty and emergent creativity in the ontological origin of the poetic imagination without smothering or destroying its essence.

More simply, Bachelard refers to the “phenomenological powers of reading, which make the reader a poet at the level of the image read.”<sup>22</sup> The reader of the poetic image engages with the image to such an intimate extent that it takes root in the psyche of the reader, who comes to own the poem even as if having written it. This connection is the transsubjectivity of the poetic, showing that the poetic image has a life of its own that carries it into the heart (or soul) of the reader. The phenomenologist, in order to bring to light this fragile being of the fleeting image that is ever emerging, takes the position of the enthusiastic reader, looking for the deep sympathy with the poetry that carries one along with it, turning the reader or phenomenologist into a “beneficiary” of the poetic. Extending beyond the poetics of written poetry, Bachelard credits J. H. Van den Berg with the idea “that things ‘speak’ to us and that we have therefore, if we give full value to this language, a contact with those things.”<sup>23</sup>

Bachelard’s phenomenological poetics does seek to give full value to this language—to the poetic *logos*--by setting aside the structures of knowledge that would interfere with the poetic reverberations, “to take the poetic image in its being” by an attitude of receptivity, of being present to the image, of listening to its voice.<sup>24</sup> The

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<sup>21</sup> *ibid.*, 8.

<sup>22</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>23</sup> *ibid.*, 11.

<sup>24</sup> Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, xxv.



stance is somewhat of a purposeful naiveté.<sup>25</sup> In a notion similar to Norris' "not knowing", Bachelard observes that: "In poetry, non-knowing is a primary condition; . . . an image is an over-running of all the premises of sensibility."<sup>26</sup> He calls this way of thinking "revery," which he describes as a more relaxed, calm and active consciousness that is able to consider the image as pre-cognitive, since "in poems are manifested forces that do not pass through the circuits of knowledge."<sup>27</sup> "Believing at times to be studying things, one is merely opening oneself to a type of revery."<sup>28</sup> Bachelard turns his revery, in the rest of *The Poetics of Space*, to the poetics of intimate spaces, and in particular to the house, the image of which "would appear to have become the topography of our intimate being."<sup>29</sup>

### Objectivity and Subjectivity

One of the linchpins in the traditional structure of rational knowledge is a paradigm that is deeply entrenched in Western thought: the dualism of object and subject. This ontological pair corresponds to the epistemological objectivity/subjectivity. The duality as a whole, ontological and epistemological, has dominated the modern worldview and its approach to knowledge. The paradigm and its hegemony are brought into question by poetics, which provides an alternative perspective.

The root "ject" comes from the Latin verb meaning "to throw"; it is related to the verb "jet" and to "projectile," which is a thing thrown.<sup>30</sup> The dualism proceeds from this root to offer a choice: to throw under, "sub-", or to throw out opposite, "ob-." The

<sup>25</sup> Roch C. Smith, *Gaston Bachelard* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1982).

<sup>26</sup> Bachelard, *La Poétique de L'Espace*, 15.

<sup>27</sup> *ibid.*, 5.

<sup>28</sup> *ibid.*, 19.

<sup>29</sup> Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, xxxii.

<sup>30</sup> Walter W. Skeat, *The Concise Dictionary of English Etymology* (Ware, Hertfordshire, England: Wordsworth Reference, 1993).

reference here is to the mind or the self: an object stands before the mind, or opposite to it, while a subject is placed under the mind, as that which underlies its perceptions, i.e., the thoughts, feelings, or awareness of a particular self/subject.<sup>31</sup> The objective is therefore what exists independently of the mind or self, while the subjective is dependent upon, or under, an individual or collective subject.

The modern worldview joins this basic duality with Descartes' mind-body dualism, according to which the mind is a thinking subject, observing unthinking, mechanistic things, or bodies.<sup>32</sup> Objectivity, a mode of thinking that removes the subject from the equation of knowledge, becomes the means by which to understand the mechanical workings and nature of a world full of things, without the distractions of a world full of the personal feelings, reactions, and biases of subjectivity. Following this line of logic, knowledge, as objective or scientific, may then deal only with objects, i.e., *things* independent of the observing mind. Everything else must be, by definition, subjective and therefore irrelevant to knowledge. This category of subjective other would include personal opinions, emotions, associations, and unprovable things that must be relegated to the realm of religion or flights of fancy.

As we have moved into a postmodern worldview, subjectivity has been taken more seriously, in some contexts toppling objectivity from its position of dominance. Forms of humanism have placed value upon the personal subjectivity of the subject, so that media such as literature or diaries may be studied to gain subjective knowledge. Or, more recently, poststructuralism has placed value on aggregate subjects, especially on the subjectivity of non-dominant social groups, determined by categories such as race, class, ethnicity, and gender.<sup>33</sup> Subjectivity overturns the dominant status of

<sup>31</sup> Thomas Mautner, *A Dictionary of Philosophy* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), s.v. "Subject."

<sup>32</sup> René Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy*, trans. John Cottingham (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1986 [1640]).

<sup>33</sup> E.g., James Duncan and David Ley, eds., *Place/Culture/Representation* (London and New York:

objectivity in theories of narrative as a subjective, ideological tool of power and identity. This overturning of the dualism to put the subjective over the objective, as championed by figures such as Foucault, Derrida, and, a century earlier, Nietzsche, undermines the judgment of value by which objectivity is esteemed over mere subjectivity.<sup>34</sup> However, the basic dualism, the belief that there is a choice between only the two, is maintained. Subjectivity, individual or collective, has simply traded places with its partner. Put another way, the locus of the epistemological burden has been shifted: we look for knowledge in the subject instead of the object. For objectivity, it is a burden of proof, of reality independent from the subject. For subjectivity, it is a burden of personality (in subjective humanism) or a burden of ideology (in poststructuralism). Thus, scholarship based on the paradigms of science, of subjective humanism, and of poststructural social theory all reflect the metaparadigm of subject-object.

This metaparadigm has limitations, however. Any system that defines what exists, what may be known, and how to go about knowing (i.e., ontology and epistemology) necessarily determines that some matters are within the realm of knowledge and others are not. Some things are therefore ignored as irrelevant and others fall through the cracks.

One corollary of the subject-object paradigm has been the dualism of science and belief. According to this dualism, the things and ideas of the world must belong to one of the two categories, and these categories are held so distinct that they may be considered at times contradictory. A person might accept the laws of probability and

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Routledge, 1993).

<sup>34</sup> Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge and the Discourse on Language*, trans. A. M. Sheridan Smith (New York: Pantheon Books, 1972); Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974); Friedrich Nietzsche, "Thus Spake Zarathustra," in *The Portable Nietzsche*, ed. and trans. Walter Kauffmann (New York: Viking Penguin, 1982 [1892]).

statistics on the one hand, while firmly believing in the power of luck on the other. The tension between science and religion is a striking depiction of the hold this dualism has in American society. Each way of thinking is expected to remain on its own turf and to leave all else to its rival, but conflicts inevitably erupt in a sort of turf war as the two dance around each other like characters from “West Side Story.” The Scopes Monkey Trial is perhaps the exemplary point of conflict between the two realms of knowing.

In the uneasy truce between science (or reason) and belief (or faith), objectivity and subjectivity are solidified and made rigid in a system of knowledge that makes no provision for anything that might fit neither category. For example, astrology is criticized as scientifically unacceptable, so that it must therefore be considered belief. From the other side, however, religious orthodoxy condemns it as invalid belief. Astrology, with its rich tradition of symbolism, meaning, and practice that has little to do with the common newspaper horoscope, thus falls between the cracks of dualistic thought, allowed to take up residence on neither side.<sup>35</sup> This was not always the case, however: astrology was common among scientists and theologians of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, including Copernicus, Galileo, and Newton.<sup>36</sup> It now joins the company of in-between ideas such as mythology, alchemy, reverie, mood, magic, poetry, intuition, and art, neither objective nor subjective. These in-between ideas are not, however, beyond the reach of a poetics that abandons the rigid judgments of the dualistic worldview.

This “jective” paradigm thus partitions reality into its two exclusive categories, subject and object, and it sets up systems of knowledge based upon that conception.

Whatever does not fit into either category is marginalized or banished from view. The

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<sup>35</sup> Gareth Knight, *Magic and the Western Mind: Ancient Knowledge and the Transformation of Consciousness* (St. Paul, Minn.: Llewellyn Publications, 1991).

<sup>36</sup> Luis Alvarado, *Psychology, Astrology & Western Magic: Image and Myth in Self-Discovery* (St. Paul, Minn.: Llewellyn Publications, 1991).

systems of knowledge, the epistemologies, built on this paradigm are unable to make sense out of what may be “nonjective”: such things cannot be explained. Here, our very language betrays the depth at which jectivity has a stranglehold on our worldview. Referring to what might be outside the duality, what might be nonjective, what can we call it? The choices we have are all loaded as either subject or object: “anything” refers to some object, “any one” to some subject, and “subject matter” is object (matter) placed under a subject, while pronouns must choose between object (“it”) and subject (“who”).

The trap of dualism in language contains within itself a possible way out, which is to cross the barriers of the language and apply subjective words to what are normally considered objects. This “making” of extra-ordinary connections is precisely the realm of poetics. Poetically, the sun may walk across the sky, a stone may be overwhelmed with emotion, or the ocean may have a purpose and a will. Considered beyond the constraints of jectivity, these become more than mere metaphors; they become expressions of another realm, where Bachelard’s poetic image has its own being, and where place speaks for itself.<sup>37</sup>

The trick of poetic language, to subvert jectivity by violating its categories, does more than create a way out of the paradigm. It expresses the nonjectivity that is already recognized by the poet, i.e., it expresses poetically what (who) is poetic. This dissertation is a working to express the nonjectivity in the poetic relation to place, particularly in the garden, a relation which is “emplacement,” wherein subject and object collapse into a continuous relational whole. Casey calls this collapse the “deconstructive meltdown” of binaries (including subject-object) “that have enjoyed

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<sup>37</sup> See also Miles Richardson, “Looking at a World That Speaks,” in *Re-Reading Cultural Geography*, ed. Kenneth E. Foote, Peter J. Hugill, Kent Mathewson, and Jonathan M. Smith (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1994); David Abram, *The Spell of the Sensuous: Perception and Language in a More-Than-Human World*, (New York: Vintage, 1997).

hegemonic power in Western epistemology and metaphysics,” a meltdown made visible by the phenomenology of place.<sup>38</sup> Bachelard expresses the same sentiment more visually: “At the level of the poetic image, the duality of subject and object is iridescent, shimmering, unceasingly active in its inversions.”<sup>39</sup>

Leaving behind the paradigm of jectivity, the rest of this chapter will address the nonjective poetics of place in its ontology, epistemology, expression, and conceptualization. The ontology is a being-in-place, according to which we are immersed in place, not detached as subject to object. The epistemology is about our knowledge of this being-in-place, achieved by phenomenological apprehension and poetic awareness. Thirdly, poetics expresses nonjectivity by stretching language beyond its usual limits. The progression from poetic being, to poetic knowing, to poetic saying lays the foundation for the discovery of emplacement as we are-in-the-world. Finally, poetics of place leads to possible nonjective conceptualizations of the relation between humans and world.

### **Nonjective Ontology: Being-in-the-world**

If poetics can offer an alternative to the ontology of subject and object, what does this nonjective ontology look like? What would be poetic being-in-place? These questions of what is poetic, or what is nonjective, are not separable in any practical way from the issues of knowledge, but it may be helpful here to consider them before proceeding to the poetic knowing that permits them to be recognized at all. For phenomenology and poetic knowing are necessarily about some-thing (for lack of a nonjective term); they must return, according to the central dictum of phenomenology, “to the matters themselves.”

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<sup>38</sup> Edward S. Casey, “How to Get from Space to Place in a Fairly Short Stretch of Time: Phenomenological Prolegomena,” in Steven Feld and Keith H. Basso, eds., *Senses of Place* (Santa Fe, New Mexico: School of American Research Press), 36.

<sup>39</sup> Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, xv.

The revolutionary move away from jective modern ontology was made by Martin Heidegger in the 1920's with his phenomenology.<sup>40</sup> Phenomenology existed before Heidegger--Hegel used the term early on, and then Husserl made a methodology of it--but it was Heidegger's study of "being" that broke with the traditions of jective knowledge, including the phenomenology of his teacher Husserl, whose method remained within the dualistic structure of subject and object.<sup>41</sup> Heidegger's *Being and Time* is an existential phenomenology of human "being," which he calls *Dasein*. *Dasein*'s existence is, in essence, not Husserl's transcendental ego nor Descartes' thinking thing, but rather an existence necessarily and fundamentally in context, "being-in-the-world" (*In-der-Welt-Sein*). *Dasein*, literally "being-there," is in a state of everyday immersion in place and in relation to others. Being-in-the-world is a precognitive state, a mode of relating to the world as a part of it, prior to the placement of any theoretical structure between person and world. It is a way of being before things are turned into objects, when they are still tools or equipment (*zeug*) that naturally incorporate into life.

The pen with which I write, for example, is not an object to me when I pick it up to write with it. I do not stop to consider the thingness of the pen; I merely reach for it to act as what it is, as one who writes. I am with the pen, writing. If I stop writing to consider the pen, to think of how it was made or who invented it, I then turn the pen into an object. I have then placed distance between myself and the pen, a distance accomplished by adding the subject-object duality into the mix. Before, the pen was an extension of my hand, a mediator from myself to the paper, an instrument of my

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<sup>40</sup> Martin Heidegger, *The History of the Concept of Time: Prolegomena*, trans. Theodore Kisiel (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1985), from his lectures in 1925; Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1962 [1927]).

<sup>41</sup> Robert Mugerauer, *Interpretations on Behalf of Place: Environmental Displacements and Alternative Responses* (Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 1994).

thoughts and words that brought them into visible writing. After, it is no longer part of my hand, but an object I hold between my fingers. Heidegger's phenomenology would consider the pen as it exists together with me, in nonjective relation, before the concept "object" is applied.

Being-in-the-world is the precognitive existence in context and in contact, an immersion in which I am not yet a subject and the world is not yet an object, nor a collection of objects. Nor am I an object inside the world, for the "in" of being-in-the-world is not a containment, "as water in 'in' the glass, or the garment is 'in' the cupboard."<sup>42</sup> Instead of this spatial sense of "in," being-in is a residing, a dwelling amidst, or an involvement, like being in love or being in show business.<sup>43</sup> Being-in-the-world is a direct engagement with the world that is basic to how we live our everyday lives and fundamental to our existence. In this "lifeworld," from which phenomenology begins, body and mind are not distinguished (contrary to Descartes), nor are self and world. One is integrated with environment (*Umwelt*); or "I am my environment."<sup>44</sup>

Since Heidegger, other scholars have elaborated and expanded upon the idea of being-in-the-world, and some have applied the concept more specifically to place and environment. Merleau-Ponty, in his *Phenomenology of Perception*, emphasized that our experience with the world is relational, caused neither by its objectivity nor by our subjectivity. As relational, neither world nor person are static, but are together in process: "The world is not what I think, but what I live through."<sup>45</sup> Bachelard, in

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<sup>42</sup> Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 79.

<sup>43</sup> Hubert L. Dreyfus, *Being-in-the-World: A Commentary on Heidegger's Being and Time, Division I* (Cambridge, Mass., London, England: The MIT Press, 1991).

<sup>44</sup> Professor Greg Schufreider, in a lecture for the course "Existentialism." Department of Philosophy, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, December 4, 1995.

<sup>45</sup> Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. Colin Smith (London and New York: Routledge, 1962 [1945]), xvi-xvii.



*The Poetics of Space*, investigates the theoretical aspects of poetic ontology and applies them to a phenomenological poetics of the house.<sup>46</sup> Norberg-Schulz's phenomenology of architecture, *Genius Loci*, studies being-in-place in both natural and built environments.<sup>47</sup> Seamon and Mugerauer's edited volume, *Dwelling, Place, & Environment*, addresses relation to place in a variety of ways, with phenomenological interpretations drawing not only on Heidegger's "being-in-the-world," but also his later idea of "dwelling."<sup>48</sup> Abram, in *The Spell of the Sensuous*, considers our immersion in the world as it is tied up with language and with the body, in a phenomenology based on Merleau-Ponty.<sup>49</sup> Berleant, in *The Aesthetics of Environment*, explains what I call the nonjective ontology as a relationship of continuity.<sup>50</sup>

For there is no outside world. There is no outside. Nor is there an inner sanctum in which I can take refuge from inimical external forces. The perceiver (mind) is as aspect of the perceived (body) and conversely; person and environment are continuous.

Finally, Casey, in "How to Get from Space to Place," argues for the primacy of place, following those such as Heidegger and Bachelard who assert that we always already find ourselves in place.<sup>51</sup> In a different slant on the distinction of being-in-the-world and the ontology of jectivity, Casey proposes that the theory according to which place is created out of universal (i.e., objective) space is invalid: place, in which we are

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<sup>46</sup> Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*.

<sup>47</sup> Christian Norberg-Schulz, *Genius Loci: Towards a Phenomenology of Architecture* (New York: Rizzoli, 1980).

<sup>48</sup> David Seamon and Robert Mugerauer, eds., *Dwelling, Place, & Environment: Towards a Phenomenology of Person and World* (New York, Oxford: Columbia University Press Morningside Edition, 1989); Martin Heidegger, "Building Dwelling Thinking," in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, trans. Albert Hofstadter (New York: Harper & Row, 1971).

<sup>49</sup> Abram, *The Spell of the Sensuous*.

<sup>50</sup> Arnold Berleant, *The Aesthetics of Environment* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1992), 4.

<sup>51</sup> Casey, "How to Get from Space to Place."

immersed, is primary, so that we are always “emplaced.” All of these authors use phenomenology, and sometimes poetics, to disclose the richness of place as integrated with human experience, continuing the revolution against the hegemony of the paradigm of jectivity in favor of the nonjective lifeworld Heidegger revealed with his word-puzzle “being-in-the-world.”

### **Nonjective Epistemology: Poetic Knowing**

If one has accepted the existence of a poetic ontology beyond the confines of a world partitioned into subjects and objects, and if this poetic being cannot be understood using the traditional methods of knowledge based on objectivity and subjectivity, how then can one know, poetically? This question of epistemology is addressed by the methods of existential phenomenology and by the poetic ways of knowing, which include poetic awareness, apprehension, and relational perception. These are not different steps in a knowledge process, because such poetic knowing is by nature more holistic than analytic; they are instead different ways of expressing the same idea of poetic knowledge.

The shift from ordinary being-in-the-world to an objective/ subjective stance is a “backing-up” that puts distance between person and world and interposes cognitive or theoretical structures that obscure the poetic qualities of that engaged world. Poetic knowing, on the other hand, aims to shed light upon the everyday, pointedly without backing away into a rational cognitive stance. Phenomenology provides a methodological ground for this alternative epistemology, by “bracketing” theoretical ways of thinking, i.e., by setting aside the structures of reason, to consider the matters themselves, in a reflective attitude that remains engaged in the world and allows the recognition of poetic ontologies. Bachelard’s poetic image is thus preserved, without the destructive interference of cognitive theories.

This same mode of knowing is expressed more simply in the language of poetics: the sense of awareness and the use of the senses are seen, for example, in the collage of quotations on poetics, above. Coleridge referred to an “awakening [of] the mind’s attention from the lethargy of custom.”<sup>52</sup> In encountering the freshness of the poetic, “charmed” by its novelty, we are directed to the “inexhaustible treasure” that is the world directly before us, to which our senses have become dull.<sup>53</sup> Poetics reminds us to see what is already before our eyes, and to notice the everyday. We are directed-toward what is poetic, to come to know intimately what we had forgotten to remember at all.

Poetic knowing, as an awareness or awakening, happens by means of what I shall call the “poetic pause.” A poetic pause is a shift of consciousness from work-a-day being-in-the-world, as we go about our business, often on “automatic pilot,” to a new extraordinary consciousness that stops the busy-ness of purposeful doing in its tracks. A sudden emergence occurs into awareness: perhaps a moment on the way to the supermarket, a way taken so many uneventful times before, when the beauty of a cloud formation catches the soul and sends it soaring into the sky. Usually, a trip to the store is so unremarked that we would be hard pressed to remember a single detail five minutes afterward, but this time there is a poetic pause, and the blur of everyday doing is brought into sharp focus. Poetically, we know.

The movement out of habit that is a poetic pause is very different from the “backing-up” into jective knowing. In poetic knowing, the awakening of awareness and of the senses brings us into closer contact with the “things” around us, the poetic being which we are directed toward. It is almost a stepping forward, except that we are already in the midst of it, being-in-the-world. As the world shows itself to us, or as it

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<sup>52</sup> Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria*, 160.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*

speaks, we now have eyes to see and ears to hear. Just as Kennedy's poet offers writing to be read "perceptively, thoughtfully, and considerately, with more attention to sounds and connotations," the world we are being-in can take the role of the poet and offer itself to be attended ("intended") poetically.<sup>54</sup> This is the poetics of place.

Knowledge is about understanding, and at first glance it may seem that this poetic knowing is not understanding, but mere perception. Yet understanding takes many forms, and here there is no need to stretch language to its limits to see the knowing of the poetic: we need only pause upon the words what we already have. For our Anglo-Saxon word "understand," we have two corresponding terms rooted in Latin: "comprehend" and "apprehend."<sup>55</sup> While "comprehend" is still in common use, "apprehend," as understand, has largely fallen away. This is a telling trend, reflective of the biases of jectivity in the differing shades of meaning of the two terms. To comprehend is to grasp with the mind, while to apprehend is to grasp with the senses. Under the Cartesian bias toward the mind, comprehension is clearly favored, while the senses, associated with the devalued body, are discounted as merely perceptive.<sup>56</sup> Poetics reaffirms the value of sensory knowing--of apprehending--and it applies this way of knowing to the poetic ontologies inaccessible to comprehension, as Bachelard, among others, has shown. Here we see that Shelley's assertion that poetic language "marks the before unapprehended relation of things and perpetuates their apprehension" is a statement of poetic knowing, of sensory understanding distinct from rationalistic comprehension.<sup>57</sup> In poetic knowing, we "come to our senses."

<sup>54</sup> Kennedy, *Introduction to Poetry*, 174.

<sup>55</sup> Skeat, *Dictionary of English Etymology*; *Oxford English Dictionary*; William Morris, ed., *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*, New College Edition (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1980).

<sup>56</sup> Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*.

<sup>57</sup> Shelley, "A Defense of Poetry," 182.

Poetic knowing, as awakening, awareness, and apprehending, involves perceiving with a receptiveness to which we are unaccustomed. One way to express this is as “seeing-with.” “Seeing” is understood both literally and figuratively, not limited to the vision of the eyes. “With” is relational, in contrast to “at.” By seeing-with we are engaged *with* what is perceived, rather than directing the senses *at* it. “Seeing-with” is a play upon Heidegger’s “being-with” (*Mitsein*), although the shades of meaning are different.<sup>58</sup> Seeing-with is a skill and a practice that has become rare in modern Western society. Perhaps it has always been rare, because of our tendency to habitualize everyday life and to shift into another mode when we step out of habit: the mode of problem solving. The problem-solving mode has also become a habit, and since the Enlightenment it has taken on the form of science and technology. This way of thinking is not limited, however, to the conscious purposeful application of scientific method or mechanical problem-solving, but also includes the more subtle, more unconscious habit of analysis.

Analysis is the approach to knowledge which breaks things down into pieces. From the Greek ἀναλυσισ (analysis), it means a resolving back into constituent parts: a “loosening” or “releasing,” from the verb ἀναλueiv (analuein), to “undo” or “untie.”<sup>59</sup> While there are clear benefits of this process of analysis, exemplified by this breaking down of the word itself, the gains in knowledge can be accompanied by a “loss” signaled by the etymology. What is lost in breaking a thing apart to explain it is the view of the whole before us. By shifting into a mode that loosens a body into bones, muscles, skin, hair, organs, blood, etc., one is no longer seeing the being that is that whole person; this being, this whole, is lost. Similarly, to analyze a sunset into the constituent parts—the earth’s rotation, the varying wave lengths of light producing

<sup>58</sup> Heidegger, *Being and Time*.

<sup>59</sup> *American Heritage Dictionary*.

colors, the effect of atmospheric particles on the appearance of light, the meteorologic conditions at work in the formation of nearby clouds, etc.--fails to capture the sunset before us, a whole greater than its parts. Even some of these parts, the beauty, peace, or romance of the event, do not take well to analytic explanation. The analysis gains for us something, but "loses" an underlying essence. Enter the poet.

The seeing-with of poetic apprehension goes not only beyond vision but, as Berleant shows in his *The Aesthetics of Environment*, even beyond the five senses.<sup>60</sup> Besides the five senses usually considered, the range of the sensory experience that engages us with environment includes perception of such qualities as temperature and humidity, as well as the kinesthetic sense that gauges awareness of the body's position, movement, and context.<sup>61</sup>

We not only *see* our living world; we move with it, we act upon and in response to it. We grasp places not just through color, texture, and shape, but with the breath, by smell, with our skin, through our muscular action and skeletal position, in the sounds of wind, water, and traffic.

Yet even a broadening list of the senses by which we experience the world does not suffice to explain poetic or aesthetic experience, for these merge together into a greater whole, and this multidimensional experience merges with environment itself, becoming enmeshed in place, as we are being-in-the-world.

So poetic knowing in which we awaken to an awareness of what-is poetic, by apprehending and seeing-with what is brought to attention by the poetic pause, is a mode of knowing applicable to poetic being in a way that traditional structures of knowledge, as rational analysis or comprehension, cannot. In coming to our senses, we are able to know the being of the poetic image, or the poetic moment.

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<sup>60</sup> Berleant, *The Aesthetics of Environment*.

<sup>61</sup> Berleant, *The Aesthetics of Environment*, 19.

## Poetic Language: Expression

Poetics is being and it is knowing, but it is also expression, with which the other two are intertwined. Poetic expression is found not only in the writing of a poem or a description of something poetic, but also in the speaking of the poetic itself. Here is Bachelard's poetic *logos*, with its own ontology arising in its expression of itself, in its speaking-being. Whether the poet speaks her poem, or a place speaks for itself, the speaking emerges as poetic image, no longer a mere tool of the speaker: "language-as-instrument" is abandoned in favor of "language-as-reality."<sup>62</sup> Thus the poetic *logos* is simultaneously expression and being, susceptible to poetic knowing when we become willing to listen to "a world that speaks."<sup>63</sup>

Here, however, I mean not only to listen to the world's poetics, but also to speak of it, and this returns my narrative back to the issues of language itself and its relation to poetics. Just as the poet pushes language to its edges to bring ordinary experiences into extraordinary awareness, speaking about poetics requires a stretching of language. Heidegger and Bachelard are both witnesses to this, as they make language squirm in their grasp in the drive to convey ideas the words are not comfortable wearing. Squirming is necessary, for what is on the edge of language is also on the edge of consciousness, and the teasing of words is one route to exposure.

In order to think in new directions, we must wrestle with the tendency of words to take one in old directions, to lead the reader astray into well-worn habits of interpretation. On other occasions, poetics involves not a struggle with words, but also musing, or wandering off into unfamiliar territory, in a state of reverie. In my quest to express the poetics of poetics, I am teasing words in a variety of ways, with

<sup>62</sup> Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, xxiii.

<sup>63</sup> Richardson, "Looking at a World That Speaks."

etymologies, truncations (“jective”), and other musings. However, another tool in this game with words is to take them into neighborhoods where they do not seem to belong, to apply them out of context in order to reach toward new pathways. One example of this is the use of apparently religious language in non-religious contexts, such as Bachelard’s use of “soul” in poetic knowing, to distinguish it from the habits of the rational mind. “Spirit of place” is another use of religious language to break out of paradigmatic restrictions a concept I explore at the end of this chapter. Such poetic applications of words are easily misunderstood as mere analogy, but they go much deeper when they are part of the work of poetics to reveal unseen ontologies and to promote the apprehension of what we have forgotten to notice.

One such poetic use of language, in regard to language itself, carries the idea of magic into unfamiliar territory. Abram points out that to form a word is to “spell,” so to cast a spell.<sup>64</sup> Watts finds magic in the ability to communicate “water” without having to lead someone to a stream. He also warns that language can work dangerous magic upon us: “We are all bewitched by words. We confuse them with the real world, and try to live in the real world as if it were a world of words.”<sup>65</sup> By the same token, however, the magic “spell” can pull us out of the bewitchment of ordinary not-noticing, as Coleridge finds poetry a “charm” to excite and awaken us. Poetic expression is, then, a magic spell of language, a being and knowing as much as a saying. It is a *logos* from to the world, or from the poet, if we allow ourselves to hear it.

### Emplacement and Poetics

Place is the ground of our being, knowing, and expressing, for we are never nowhere: we are always being-in-place. Furthermore, the places in which we dwell, for a moment or a lifetime, cannot be fully explained; that is, the ways of knowing that

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<sup>64</sup> Abram, *Spell of the Sensuous*.

<sup>65</sup> Alan Watts, *The Wisdom of Insecurity* (New York: Quality Paperback Book Club, 1994 [1951]), 50.



depend upon rationality, analysis, causal explanation, and ultimately on the paradigm of objectivity are unable to address the totality of what place is to us. Poetics of place concerns what is alien to explanation, i.e. what is nonobjective. As Bachelard puts it, poetics “escapes from causality,”<sup>66</sup> taking us to the realm of creativity, imagination, association, mood, engagement, intuition, and mystery. The engagement with place is my focus here: how are we immersed in, being-with, involved in, wrapped up with, and acting into place. In other words, it is how the world and I enmesh, together.

Emplacement is the art of connecting and reconnecting to the earth, or to the places in which we find ourselves. It is connecting to a relation with our surroundings that we already have, a relation we habitually fail to notice as we go about the automatic busyness of our lives. This relation is an immersion, a tangling up of our selves with our surroundings. Although we frequently think of ourselves as detached from our environments, we are also continuous with them, exchanging oxygen for carbon dioxide, taking in the smell, light waves, and sound waves, leaving behind bits of ourselves, and carrying on a constant exchange of meaning and of vitality. Emplacement is a becoming-aware of this immersed quality of how we are in our places, a connection.

Emplacement is a reconnection as well as a connection, a response to the disconnection that modern life has created between human beings and their earth, a striving to carry the connection further than the relationship of which we can become aware. Emplacement, in this sense, is an intentional movement, like sinking oneself down into a warm bath after a hard day. We sink into the richness of our surroundings, reminding ourselves of the variety of textures and colors to be found in the world, finding out how a place touches us, hearing its whispering voices and seeing

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<sup>66</sup> Bachelard, *La Poétique de L'Espace*, 2.

its elusive spirits. Emplacement is a reconnection, reattaching us to a world full of vital experiences forgotten in the rush to get the errands done.

When I read a poem, I engage its imagination with mine. I do the same thing when looking at a painting, listening to music, attending a play, taking a walk through a city, or feeling the imagination of water as I swim.

Shaun McNiff<sup>67</sup>

The extreme ontological position inherent in emplacement—that what is poetic takes on its own being—leads to some radical conclusions about the around-us which we may call, somewhat interchangeably, world, environment, place, landscape, or earth. Poetically, this ontology brings up the question of how to conceptualize “earth” (or whichever term one prefers), if not as an object. I conclude this chapter on poetics with two poetic aspects on place, or earth, that address possibilities of how we might engage imaginatively.

### Earth: Stage or Player?

“All the world is a stage”<sup>68</sup> is a poetic expression of a common conception of relations between humans and world. If we take seriously Bachelard’s claim to poetic ontology, however, the poetic world around us demands an alternative to the objectifying conception of earth as stage. A nonjective alternative conceives of earth as something closer to “player” than “stage.”

We often consider place as a setting or situation for social relations, which can reveal much about those relations, including expressions of identity, power, politics, and ideology. This is a humanistic venture aimed at revealing things human and inhumane. To consider place in relation between humans and the earth itself is another project entirely. The matters are no longer restricted to humanism but expanded to consider the earth as well, of equal relevance. From this perspective, place reveals

<sup>67</sup> Shaun McNiff, *Earth Angels: Engaging the Sacred in Everyday Things* (Boston: Shambhala, 1995), 103.

<sup>68</sup> William Shakespeare, *As You Like It*, act II, scene vii, line 139.

something besides just what we mean to each other; something of our interaction and conceptualization of the world around us, itself an actor rather than mere stage. Here one begins to consider the personality of places, and therefore the personhood of earth, necessitating an approach to the human-earth relationship that is deeper than the simple reductions of environmental determinism or environmental impact. These reductions ascribe dominance to one party or the other, glossing over more complex interactive dynamics.

To envision the relationship as more interactive brings up the question of how the earth can be considered to “act.” A phenomenological conception of this is that the earth speaks, or shows itself. In another sense, the earth certainly “acts” in the drama of earthquake or flood, or in the more typical running water, flowing air, movement of sunlight across a place during the day, growth and death of living things, and the march of the seasons. In the garden, these acts of earth are fundamental, and they are given: we can but rearrange them. Physical science takes on the processes of the earth, to understand and explain them, but this is a jective approach to the interaction that does not contribute to the nonjective poetic. To take up the personality of earth and place, or to consider its “spirit,” however, moves the affair into the realm of poetics. A person-to-person perspective on human and earth makes clear that poetics of place is not merely in the human realm (as description or as aesthetics). Poetry seems very much of the humanities, but when it is about earth and place, the sense of personality has spread beyond its human limits, beyond humanism.

The consideration of earth or place as having personality or spirit may appear to be just a projection of human qualities onto earth and therefore essentially humanistic, but such a view confines subjectivity to human persons.<sup>69</sup> The accusation of

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<sup>69</sup> James Hillman, *Re-Visioning Psychology* (New York: HarperPerennial, 1975).

anthropomorphism carries behind it an assumption of mechanicism, i.e. that everything other than *Homo sapiens* is a dead machine. According to this view, to ascribe spirit, soul, emotions, personality, or being to anything not human is to anthropomorphize. Difficult questions then arise: “what is person?” and “what is spirit?” The latter issue may be more straightforward, as etymologically “spirit” connects to breath, as in “respiration,” and wind seems clearly the breath of the earth.<sup>70</sup> More figuratively, spirit is about what is invisible, mysterious, or ghostly (*Geist*), taking us far beyond the region of mechanicism, proof, certainty, and truth. These invisible qualities are not restricted to the human person (whether individual or corporate). We must then allow the possibility of spirit in earth and in place, conceptualized as “*genius loci*.” The ascribing of such spirit to place or earth rests upon the expansion of one’s understanding of personhood.

Can the earth, or places, reasonably be considered person? The etymology goes to Latin “*persona*,” probably from an Etruscan word for “mask,” relating back to our use of “*persona*.”<sup>71</sup> “Person” as “mask” does not sound quite right to the contemporary ear, as we have come to distinguish person from *persona*, with the latter as mask but the former as genuine self or identity. Perhaps a person is one who identifies itself; but then we could never determine personhood outside that which shares our language, and we are left only with the option to call person whatever we choose to call person (not a helpful conclusion).

“Personality” may be a little more relevant, but its synonym “character” brings it all right back to the stage upon which we started, and the idea of masks. However, a mask may not be simply a false thing, but any outward expression, or the face on a person, of which we each have many. Just as we have a face or mask (rather, many)

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<sup>70</sup> Skeats, *Dictionary of English Etymology*.

<sup>71</sup> *American Heritage Dictionary*.

visible to the intersubjective field, the earth certainly does also: it has many expressions of itself, made possible by its mutable nature. For the face of the earth changes, and not only by human action. It changes across both space and time: here a meadow or forest, there an ocean or mountain, altering by the season and varying by the hour or by the century. Perhaps changeability is the core of personhood, character, and masks. If so, the earth certainly qualifies, and thus has a right to be considered seriously as person, in a nonjective poetic.

### Genius Loci

Spirit of place, or *genius loci*, is a poetic way of conceptualizing place as more than what we have built into it; it allows for poetic being to arise in a place which is no longer held as merely subservient to human intentions and meanings. Because of the emergent ontology of places as poetic, places are more than just what we write into them and what we read out of them: they have their own spirit.

The argument for the spirit or soul of the world is a response to the extent to which Platonic dualism, reinforced by Descartes, has permeated our thinking. On one level, there is the problem of the divorce of the soul from the world, a project of the Enlightenment, and at a deeper level, the conceptualization which holds soul/spirit/mind as separate from world/body in the first place. While it is often proposed that our scientific-technological-mechanistic worldview is a product of Judeo-Christian thought,<sup>72</sup> the Judaic mind revealed in the Hebrew language is much different. In Hebrew, the stark separation of soul and body, between tangible and intangible, does not exist, as many of the nouns in that language carry double meanings. For example, the same word, “ruach,” means both spirit and wind, and thus spans both heaven and earth.<sup>73</sup> It is in the Greek philosophers such as Plato that we see the idea of the

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<sup>72</sup> E.g. Lynn White, Jr., “The Historical Roots of our Ecological Crisis,” *Science*, 155 (10 March, 1967): 1203-7.

<sup>73</sup> Migene González-Wippler, *A Kabbalah for the Modern World*, third ed., revised and enlarged (St.

perfect, soulful, heaven above and the imperfect, bodily, corrupt (decaying) earth/body below.<sup>74</sup>

Therefore, poetics as spirit (wind) is a bridging of a chasm built in Greek thought, between soul and body, *anima* and *mundi*. More precisely, it is a rebuilding of a bridge, because it was always Plato's intention that philosophy would rise from the earth to attain the heavens. Plato created the chasm and the bridge, medieval theology sanctified it, and then Descartes set fire to the bridge. Modernism, sparked by Descartes, proceeded to burn down the bridge entire, relegating all that is not objective, scientific, and provable to the wilderness of religion and superstition on the other side of the chasm of dualism.

Our inheritances of Western thought have bequeathed us a world stripped of its personhood and robbed of its spirits. The Enlightenment and traditions of modern thinking have rationalized them away, while the heritage of religious thought has vilified them. As the Christian church spread through Europe, zealous to convert the pagan hordes, local spirits and deities were either absorbed or condemned, reconceptualized as either Christian saints or as demons and devils.<sup>75</sup> Any belief in spirits not officially sanctioned was brutally condemned, reaching a peak of frenzy in the hysteria of the inquisitions and witch hunts. In dogma further developed by puritanical theologies of the Reformation, a staunch moral dualism of good and evil has reinforced the rational dualism of Descartes, with spirits of place firmly in realm of evil. The pluralism of postmodernism, however, has tempered this heritage somewhat, and influences such as Eastern philosophy, archetypal psychology, the anthropology of

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Paul, Minn.: Llewellyn Publications, 1993).

<sup>74</sup> Richard Tarnas, *The Passion of the Western Mind: Understanding the Ideas That Have Shaped Our World View* (New York: Ballantine, 1991).

<sup>75</sup> Ibid.; Charles W. Olliver, *Handbook of Magic & Witchcraft* (London: Senate, 1996 [1928]).

religion and mythology, and the advent of “New Age” beliefs have opened up more possibilities for the re-inspiration of world, earth, and place.

In a postmodern world, what do we do with this chasm? Even while purporting to leave behind the dogmas of Western thought inherited from the Greeks, from the Church, and from the Enlightenment, we must still talk about bridges because we have not yet unlearned the chasm. Attempts to recombine body and spirit still often resemble old ideas we don’t want to go back to, whether religious, superstitious, or protoscientific. Despite our postmodern discourse of rejecting the authority of the objective-scientific narrative, we continue to look with suspicion upon many of those things that rationality has banished to the other side of the chasm. There may be hope that in embracing the discourses of the “Other,” what has been lost may be regained, but the very idea of the Other continues in the tradition of Greek dualism.

The application of “spirit” to place as a mode of poetics is one of the implications of overcoming the chasm of Western dualistic thinking, if we can find the words and the ideas to accomplish it. The best language we have to reanimate the world may still look old-fashioned or superstitious, a sign that our Modernism is far from gone. Some of this language is from Greek mythology, going back to and before the sources of Plato’s dualism. The Greek pantheon of gods and demigods assembled from the many traditions incorporated into the Greek world encircle a world view that is much more alive than the modern one. From Ouranos, the ancient father sky, and Gaia, ancient mother earth, to Poseidon in the ocean, Pan and Artemis (Diana) in the woods, and Artemis (Ceres) in the fertile fields, the world is alive with spirits.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> Thomas Bulfinch, *The Golden Age of Myth and Legend* (Ware, Hertfordshire, England: Wordsworth Reference, 1993); Edith Hamilton, *Mythology* (New York: New American Library Mentor, 1969); Jean Shinoda Bolen, *Goddesses in Everywoman: A New Psychology of Women* (New York: HarperPerennial, 1984).

Dryads animate the trees and nyads the streams, while a blooming “narcissus” or a reverberating “echo” reflect the details of a world animated.

The figurative nature of poetics contributes to the reanimation the world, and poetic language permits personification of the supposedly inanimate under the disguise of imagination. Since poetics is not “real,” the wind can have an idea, a tree can have feelings, or the spirit of a garden can beckon passers-by like the siren luring sailors toward treacherous rocks. The challenge, of course, is to be poetic toward the spirits of the earth with the sole tool of a language already largely denuded of its spirits. To accomplish this inspiration, this poesis, this making through the obstacles of thought and language, is truly a magic feat. Part of the task is simply to understand the world as active and as full of agency not human in origin, even if we must use the trick of imagination to fool ourselves into listening to the world that speaks.

There are many different ways to “reinspire” earth-world-place: ways that poesis may happen, as we engage our imagination with the earth’s. Moore calls it the “re-enchantment of everyday life,” and Fox “transpersonal ecology,” while McNiff advises us to look for “earth angels” in all the things and places about us.<sup>77</sup> The Chinese philosophy/art of *feng-shui* (pronounced “fung shway”) aims to place people in harmony with the energy, “*chi*,” that circulates throughout our places.<sup>78</sup> Other forms of the animism upon which feng-shui is partly based may be found in primal religions the world over. Mythology, Greek or otherwise, can contribute to the enspiriting of the world, while “*genius loci*,” the guardian spirit or character of a place, and “*anima mundi*,” the soul of the world, provide other possible routes.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> Thomas Moore, *The Re-Enchantment of Everyday Life* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1996); Warwick Fox, *Toward a Transpersonal Ecology: Developing New Foundations for Environmentalism* (Boston and London: Shambhala, 1990); McNiff, *Earth Angels*.

<sup>78</sup> Master Lam Kam Chuen, *Feng Shui Handbook: How to Create a Healthier Living and Working Environment* (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1996); T. Raphael Simons, *Feng Shui Step By Step* (New York: Crown Trade Paperbacks, 1996).

<sup>79</sup> Norberg-Schulz, *Genius Loci*; Moore, *Re-Enchantment of Everyday Life*; James Hillman, *The*



One ancient way of considering the spirit(s) of the earth is according to the four elements: earth, air, fire, and water. While “spirit,” as breath gives life to the air of the world, and water is the blood running through the veins of the earth, “fire” as light is a powerful image that conveys our immersion in place. Light is the messenger between the world and the human eye, bringing our immersion into visibility: it is Hermes, the messenger, at work. So, as we are engaged with the vital world, we bathe in the light--the aura--of the spirits of place, as we feel their breath on our faces and sense their blood pulsing through earthly arteries.

Spirit is associated with inspiration, and therefore creativity, which returns to poetics. Inspiration is a gift of the muses, and by honoring the poetics of place we invoke the Muse and call forth the spirits. To see the spirits of place, however, we need to suppress our urge to measure. We like to measure, whether in isobars or parts per million or per capita, but even physics has begun to recognize the limits of measurement. A *genius loci*, the guardian deity of a place, will refuse to be measured, one way or another. To measure the genius would be to trap or confine it, which is impossible. How then are we to approach such an unmeasurable being? She refuses to be measured, but she may be willing to be imagined.

## CHAPTER THREE THE GARDEN

For “poetics of place” to have meaning, it must have to do with places, in the specific. It cannot remain abstract, as can “space,” without losing its placeness. Both phenomenology and poetics must be directed-toward: they must be *of* something. Poetics of place is practiced on the ground. The ground selected for this project is the garden, specifically the public, or visited, garden.

### Defining the Garden

In the context of academic scholarship, the setting of the garden immediately brings up the question of how to define it. First, however, let us step aside from the habitual analytic stance that demands definition, getting out from under the harsh lights of the laboratory to a more imprecise and more everyday light. From here, we already know what a garden is, and the word conjures warm images rather than cold questions. This vision of the garden, familiar and somewhat blurry (even impressionistic, like a Monet painting) in the figurative dawn of poetics, stands as the ever-present foundation for this dissertation. With the exhortation to keep this dawn view in mind, I can step again into the analytic view of white laboratory lights (ever aware that it is a pose), and tackle definition.

“Garden” is not a technical term, as is demonstrated in its stubborn tendency to give exception to definitions. To begin etymologically, the word shares with “yard” and “park” the meaning of enclosed land.<sup>1</sup> Further, it would seem clear that a garden is a plot of cultivated plants. It follows that “garden” should be defined as an enclosed plot of land devoted to the cultivation of plants. Such a definition does not hold up,

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<sup>1</sup> Kenneth R. Olwig, “Reinventing Nature: Yosemite and Mount Rushmore--A Meandering Tale of Double Nature,” in *Uncommon Ground*, William Cronon, ed. (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1995); Skeat, *Dictionary of English Etymology*.

however. It would include an apple orchard or a fenced field of crops, neither generally considered a garden. Such a definition would also exclude gardens on rooftops (not a plot of land), unfenced gardens, zoological gardens, or rock gardens, for example.<sup>2</sup> In the face of the inadequacy of a standard definition, Mara Miller suggests a working definition of the garden as “any purposeful arrangement of natural objects (such as sand, water, plants, rocks, etc.) with exposure to the sky or open air, in which the form is not fully accounted for by purely practical considerations such as convenience.”<sup>3</sup> She emphasizes that there is some “excess” of form that provides significant meaning, placing the garden in the context of the arts. This working definition is fairly satisfactory for the purposes of this dissertation, although a requirement of “open-air” may unnecessarily exclude the greenhouses or conservatories often included in botanical gardens, as well as other more closed forms, such as a mall garden.<sup>4</sup> The criteria of natural objects and excess of form, however, well meet the present needs.

The types of gardens from which I will draw examples further illustrates how I will use the term “garden.” I am including only gardens that are accessible to the public (with or without admission charge), excluding private home gardens. My examples therefore include botanical, zoological, public, museum, former estate, and university gardens, among others. The restriction to gardens open to the public means that these gardens are visited places, even though some originated as private estates or homes. The study of visited gardens places me, as the researcher, in a participative role as one of the those who visits, as part of the everyday existence of these gardens. To include private home gardens would bring into play factors that are outside the bounds of this

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<sup>2</sup> Mara Miller, *The Garden as an Art* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1993).

<sup>3</sup> Miller, *The Garden as an Art*.

<sup>4</sup> E.g. Richard Keller Simon, “The Formal Garden in the Age of Consumer Culture: A Reading of the Twentieth-Century Mall,” in *Mapping American Culture*, Wayne Franklin and Michael Steiner, eds. (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1992).

work, particularly social factors of home and hospitality.<sup>5</sup> In addition, a critical part of bodily engagement among owner/gardeners is the behavior of gardening and cultivation, usually less a factor in visited gardens. By “the garden,” then, in the context of this dissertation, I mean those visited places that roughly fit the working definition of an purposeful arrangement of natural elements, with an excess of form, in an enclosed or demarcated space.

### **Garden as Nature-Culture**

The garden as place holds a unique role in the relation between human and earth, as a meeting place of nature and culture, where human expression and creativity (poiesis) interact with elements of nature: most often plants but also stone, water, air light, soil, and fauna. The concepts of nature and culture, mutually exclusive in theory, are visibly blended in the place of the garden, which therefore serves as a milieu of rich meaning and complex experience. The garden can be reduced neither to mere artifice, constructed solely of human agency, nor to pure nature, external to the human project. As a composition of natural elements, the garden synthesizes the apparent opposition of natural and cultural, of human and environment, again disturbing the dualistic paradigm. In this sense, the garden is particularly poetic, disclosing the nonjectivity of person in place. Nature and culture merge as do human and environment.

The gardener may locate the plants, tend them, even hybridize them, yet is ever at the whims of nature’s intentions alongside his/her own. One of the ever-present dynamics in the garden is the uncertainty of what will thrive here, disclosing the specificity of place. The gardener’s attempt to put a particular plant in a desired location may be hindered, or countermanded, by regional or local climate, hungry insects or foraging mammals, unusual weather, salt air from the sea, encroaching unwanted

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<sup>5</sup> Christopher Grampp, “Social Meanings of Residential Gardens,” in *The Meaning of Gardens*, Mark Francis and Randolph T. Hester eds. (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1990).

vegetation (“weeds”), excessive rain or lack thereof, or a host of other unpredictable variables. On the other hand, natural proclivities may be offset by greenhouses, irrigation, fertilizer, pesticides, fences, pruning, etc. The garden is a partnership.

As a built environment, the garden is notable for its inconstancy, in contrast to a building or housing development, for example. The garden is much more alive than a building, waxing and waning in daily and seasonal cycles, responding to environmental fluctuations, pursuing a pattern of growth, decline, decay, and rebirth, and going its own way, to the frustration or delight of the gardener. In this open system, the energy input of the gardener is only one among many influential sources. This is what many people enjoy about gardening, the give-and-take quality of working along with natural forces.

It is tempting to portray the garden as merely an exercise of dominion over nature, but this is a gross simplification that does not account for the complex dynamics and motivations of gardening, which include the growing of food, religious symbolism and meaning, recreational value, artistic expression, aesthetic experience, social norms, and educational uses, as well as expressions of power. Although the garden is a built environment, it engenders complex variability both at the hands of nature and in human meaning, bringing it beyond the constructedness according to which it was built. Poetically, the garden takes on its own being that is not dependent solely on the forces that created it.

The “built” quality of the garden need not imply the reduction to nature-as-dominated, a reduction based on categorical separations. While to the modern mind choices must be made between nature and artifice, between the internality of a building and the externality of the garden, Renaissance thought did not make such clear distinctions among, for example, architecture, art, and landscape. It was architects who designed gardens, along with the buildings, both as works of art. While we would

make a quick distinction between a construction out of stone and a construction out of plants, perhaps the line is much thinner, or even altogether arbitrary. Topiary, live shrubbery clipped into geometric or other forms, can be quickly judged as a forcing of nature to bend to the human will, yet how is it so different from a sculpture made of stone, or of carved wood? We would further separate the statue made of rock, a work of art, from a stone wall, a work of architecture. The poetic eye may see all these in their built-ness, as useless art blurs with constructions of more useful sorts. As a work of art standing upon earth's nature and reaching from the human hand confounds the simplification of domination, the garden is built, but not simply built.

From another perspective, the garden is not only a built place influenced by nature, but also a natural place that is humanized. Nature, as the basis of the garden, has been adjusted a bit by meddling or helping humans. From this view, natural elements remain dominant and prominent, while the most the gardener can do is a bit of re-arranging, or "editing," as English master gardener Penelope Hobhouse calls it.<sup>6</sup> To walk or work in a garden is then to surround oneself with the elements of nature and the dynamics of nature. This is a key aspect in the enjoyment of gardens: to experience the qualities of nature as mediated by the craft and art of the garden.

Another way to consider the garden in regard to the nature-culture paradigm is how it relates to conceptual scale from nature to culture, on which wilderness is the extreme pole of natural landscapes, and the city is the extreme pole of cultural landscapes. Traditionally, this scale has been associated with order and chaos: wilderness is chaotic, with the dangers of wild beasts and such, while the city is orderly and safe.<sup>7</sup> A pastoral scene or a garden would be in the middle of the scale,

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<sup>6</sup> Penelope Hobhouse, "Penelope Hobhouse: The Art and Practice of Gardening," Stuart Crowner, prod. (Perennial Productions, for Home & Garden TV, 1997).

<sup>7</sup> Scott Smiley, *Making Sense Out Of Chaos: Landscape Order in Two California Wilderness Areas*

combining elements of natural wildness and cultural order. As urban environments have become increasingly chaotic, however, the garden may be considered an orderly midpoint between wilderness chaos and urban chaos.

From these various angles within the nature-culture construct, the garden is a natural work of humans and also an artificial work of nature, a compromise between order and chaos. The garden is natural, and the garden is built: these two statements confound the dualism of subject and object, both true yet neither entirely true. As a meeting and mingling place of culture and nature, as a place that makes concrete the synthesis of the nature-culture duality, as a place where subject and object become confused and interfused, the garden provides a multi-faceted poesis, a creativity of humans and earth in a duet that makes it an ideal workshop for the exploration of poetics of place.

### **The Garden as Poetic**

I have selected this setting to ground my poetics of place because the poetics of a garden are nearer the surface than in most places. The “excess of form” in gardens brings the visitor face to face with meaning and experience, providing a particularly appropriate context for an experiential study and the development of a poetics of place. People visit gardens intentionally to experience them. In addition, gardens are artistic places, where we expect enrichment of the senses beyond the mundanity of the intensely functional places we so often haunt.

The garden, as an extraordinary kind of place, is particularly poetic in part because it parallels the extraordinary quality of poetry. Just as poetry turns upon language to throw light upon ordinary life, the garden enriches emplacement through extraordinary turns of sensory and aesthetic experience. To enter a garden is to

(unpublished M.A. Thesis, California State University, Hayward, 1994); Roderick Nash, *Wilderness and the American Mind*, third edition (New Haven, Conn. and London: Yale University Press, 1982).

participate is a poetic pause, as this environment interrupts the usual “doing” mode. Gardens are sensory places, fostering engagement and the poetic awareness uncommon to our habits of being-in-the-world and of rationalization. In the garden the world comes closer to the surface, its poetic qualities emerging as we smell a flower or savor the color of a rose. The taken-for-granted way of the lived world is made self-conscious in the poetics of the garden, as in the language of a poem. Furthermore, emplacement is particularly relevant in the garden, where we are out of our cars, out of our work-a-day habits, and into a context of meaningful interaction in our sensing, lived-bodies.

One characteristic of the garden that contributes to its role in the poetic pause is its scale. The pedestrian scale of most gardens makes them more human, or more humane, than the ultra-human built landscapes of industrial and post-industrial society. They are experienced on foot, a mode that has become exceptional in our technocratic society of gigantic concrete landscapes, compulsory automotive travel, instantaneous living, and the virtual space of the information age. Our technocracy has forced a counter-evolutionary move that has reversed our rise to bipedalism: we again leave our two feet to travel on four wheels, losing one of the characteristics of what it is to be human. The garden becomes crucial to human being and well-being as a place that is scaled down to a human level, slowed down to a pace that permits an engagement not possible at sixty miles per hour, and toned down to a degree of sensory input that can be enriching rather than bombarding.

### **Western Garden History To 1700: Continental**

The history of Western gardens is a useful tool for building a vocabulary for the garden, and it is a showplace for the reverberations and archetypes that a garden can echo into the past. In a non-causal poetics, it is not the role of history as causal



explanation that is of interest, but its role as a sounding chamber, a receptacle of reverberations.

Nature-culture is one theme found again and again in the sweep of garden history. The patterns of design and meaning can be seen to swing between the two poles, now favoring naturalism, then cultural formalism. Another archetypal relationship is heaven and earth, and I shall consider this theme after the historical review. Other archetypes are suggested in the elements earth, air, fire, and water, in the sense of art that is married to the garden, and in the garden as a fluid archetype itself.

Garden archetypes and reverberations interact with the spirit of the times, the *Zeitgeist*, to become visible in the spirit of place, what might be called a "*Platzgeist*." In the following survey of the history of gardens in the West, I have concentrated on how the history of ideas is linked with the landscapes of the garden, so that the variety of garden poesis, garden "making," may be seen across space and time. I have divided this history into two sections, the first through the seventeenth century, with a focus on continental Europe, and the second from the eighteenth century to the present, with a focus on English and American gardens.

The story of Western gardens begins in the practical and the religious, from whence it moves into the philosophical and the artistic. Kitchen gardens, sacred gardens, gardens solitary or social, formal or informal, majestic or popularist are scattered along the meandering path of the garden through time.

### The Oasis Garden

Just as Western civilization finds its roots in the arid culture hearth of the Near and Middle East, so too does the Western garden. In this environment, water becomes the key element, the luxury, the extravagance. Crowe calls this the "oasis garden," an ideal of paradise (a Persian word) in a desert world.<sup>8</sup> Water is a central motif in these

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<sup>8</sup> Sylvia Crowe, *Garden Design* (Chichester, West Sussex, England: Packard, 1981).

gardens, whether in Egypt, Arabia, Persia, or India, as an element that serves physical and spiritual needs, growing food and providing inspiration. The form of these gardens is enclosed, shutting out the surrounding desert, and it is formal, with water canals or rectangular pools, and symmetric plantings of trees and flowers. In the Persian garden, the waterways take a form representing the cosmology of the four rivers of paradise. The influence of these oasis gardens reached Europe through Greek and Roman conquests, through the invading forces of the Crusades, and through the Moorish occupation of Spain.

### **Classical Greek and Roman Gardens**

The modern Western garden, however, looks to the Italian Renaissance, founded upon the ruined bones of Roman civilization and the rediscovered ideas from ancient and Hellenistic Greece.<sup>9</sup> Greek beginnings of the Western garden can be seen in the sacred groves, the outdoor gymnasium (dedicated to athletics and central to the public life), public gardens, and philosophers' gardens.<sup>10</sup> The Grecian garden was focused upon social interaction, as a place of philosophical discussion, debate, and reflection, as well as athletic competition and spectacle.

In the Roman era, villa gardens borrowed from Greece not only this social aspect (though without the emphasis on endless philosophical debate), but also many of its forms. Most important of these forms, taken from the Greek gymnasium and philosophers' garden, is the peristyle, a courtyard enclosed by a covered, pillared colonnade.<sup>11</sup> In Roman villas, such as those preserved at Pompeii, the peristyle became a part of the house, planted with trees, flowers, and other plants, along with water features.<sup>12</sup> The Roman garden differed from the Greek in spite of common

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<sup>9</sup> Derek Clifford, *A History of Garden Design*, rev. ed. (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1966).

<sup>10</sup> Tassilo Wengel, *The Art of Gardening Through the Ages* (Leipzig, East Germany: Edition Leipzig, 1987).

<sup>11</sup> Clifford, *History of Garden Design*.

forms, in that a sense of the aesthetic and private replaced the Greek sense of the sacred and public.<sup>13</sup> Roman gardens contained borrowed features from many cultures, including fountains, canals, grottoes, sculpture, and topiary, all to return in the Italian Renaissance.<sup>14</sup>

### Medieval Gardens

During the intervening Middle Ages, before the Renaissance, the garden declined from its classical expression, as did the other arts in Europe. The medieval garden remained small, enclosed, and utilitarian, with little or no thought to the aesthetic.<sup>15</sup> The foremost situation of the medieval garden was the monastery. Monastic gardens took the form of cloisters, herb gardens, vegetable gardens, and graveyards that doubled as orchards.<sup>16</sup> Cloisters were courtyards within the monastery, with a surrounding covered walkway, similar in form to the Roman peristyle, but simple and pragmatic rather than social and luxurious. These cloisters generally contained plants, and a fountain used as a water source and for sacramental purposes. Herb gardens were primarily for medicinal purposes, although an aesthetic component arose later in the period. It lead eventually to the knot garden, an intertwining pattern of herbal shrubs found in manor estates as well as monastic gardens.<sup>17</sup>

In the High Middle Ages (approximately AD 1000 to 1300), the paradise garden, an edenic construction combining pleasure and religious symbolism, developed into the form of castle gardens within the fortified walls of knightly society.<sup>18</sup> These, too, were small enclosed gardens, restricted in space by the castle context and limited

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<sup>12</sup> Germain Bazin, *Paradeisos: The Art of the Garden* (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1990).

<sup>13</sup> Clifford, *History of Garden Design*.

<sup>14</sup> Crowe, *Garden Design*.

<sup>15</sup> Bazin, *Paradeisos*.

<sup>16</sup> Wengel, *Art of Gardening*.

<sup>17</sup> Clifford, *History of Garden Design*.

<sup>18</sup> Wengel, *Art of Gardening*.

primarily to practical herbs, vegetables, and orchard trees, with only a few flowers. The use of water in gardens became more sophisticated through the influence of Moorish Spain, and as knights brought ideas back from the Crusades, having encountered oasis gardens in the East.<sup>19</sup>

The general decline of the art of gardening in medieval Europe had one notable exception: Moorish Spain. With the expansions of Islam in the seventh and eighth centuries, and with the Arab and Moorish invasion of Spain in 710, the Arabs introduced a version of the Persian garden to an otherwise anaesthetic Europe.<sup>20</sup> The Arabs held the Iberian peninsula for several centuries; most of the territory fell to Christian reconquest in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, when numerous Christian kingdoms were established in the area. From that point, only the kingdom of Granada, in southeastern Iberia, remained in Arab hands, until 1492.<sup>21</sup> The best preserved Hispano-Arab gardens are therefore found in Granada, especially at the Alhambra and Generalife.

In form, the basic component of the Hispano-Arabic garden is the patio, an open-air room again similar to the Roman peristyle. This similarity is not surprising, as Spain, one of the earliest and wealthiest of the Roman colonies, must have had an abundance of Roman ruins when the Arabs arrived.<sup>22</sup> Two main themes were played out upon this structure: water and view.<sup>23</sup> Water was used abundantly, flowing through halls and courts, cascading over terraces, and splashing from fountains.<sup>24</sup> With the Islamic prohibition against likenesses of living things, water play was an important ornamentation, later finding its way into the gardens of Renaissance Italy.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Crowe, *Garden Design*.

<sup>20</sup> Wengel, *Art of Gardening*.

<sup>21</sup> Jackson J. Spielvogel, *Western Civilization*, vol. A (St. Paul, Minn.: West, 1991).

<sup>22</sup> Clifford, *History of Garden Design*.

<sup>23</sup> Crowe, *Garden Design*.

<sup>24</sup> Wengel, *Art of Gardening*.

Views of the surrounding landscape also tied together the patios and courtyards of the Spanish garden, as views cut into the enclosed garden forms.

Color was also a part of the Spanish garden, with the use of colored tiles of blue and green, as well as flowers. Even after Christian knights began to recapture parts of Spain in the eleventh century, Spanish gardens remained more artistic and colorful than medieval gardens elsewhere in Europe. After reconquest, however, there was a trend toward more enclosure in the gardens, as well as the establishment of monasteries, bringing the Spanish garden into the realm of the more typical European medieval garden.

By the late medieval period (about 1300-1450), serfdom had declined in Western Europe, and the merchant and scholarly class was growing. While the population declined substantially due to famine and plague, trends toward the Renaissance can be seen: the establishment of universities, a weakening of ecclesiastical power, and awakening interest in the natural sciences.<sup>26</sup> These trends allowed for the establishment of modest status gardens by merchants, and of botanical gardens at the universities, setting the stage for the renewal of garden art in the Renaissance.<sup>27</sup>

### **Renaissance Gardens**

It was during the Italian Renaissance that the art of gardening was renewed and the tradition of modern gardening in the West took root. As the Renaissance brought a movement of humanism, classical revival, secularism, and a general openness to philosophy and the arts in the West, so did the garden see a renewal and a new openness.<sup>28</sup> This rebirth was focused, for the garden as for the rest of the arts, on

<sup>25</sup> Clifford, *History of Garden Design*.

<sup>26</sup> Mark Kishlansky, Patrick Geary, and Patricia O'Brien, *Civilization in the West* (New York: HarperCollins, 1991); Wengel, *Art of Gardening*.

<sup>27</sup> Geoffrey Jellicoe and Susan Jellicoe, *The Landscape of Man: Shaping the Environment from Prehistory to the Present Day* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1987).

<sup>28</sup> Albert M. Craig, et al., *The Heritage of World Civilizations*, (New York: Macmillan College

fifteenth-century Tuscany, in central Italy, under the influence of the Medici family.<sup>29</sup> Cosimo de Medici (1389-1464) founded a Platonic academy in Florence, where he and his grandson-successor, Lorenzo de Medici (1449-1492), served as patrons of the arts and surrounded themselves with such figures as DaVinci, Michaelangelo, Ficino, Donatello, and Botticelli.<sup>30</sup> Leon Battista Alberti (1404-1472), a member of this Florentine circle, was a writer, artist, musician, and architect whose extensive writings had a significant influence on Renaissance thought and practice. His *De Pictura* ("On Painting") systematized the principles of perspective in art, and his *De Re Aedificatoria* ("On Building") established the standards for Renaissance architecture and garden design.<sup>31</sup>

Under the influence of Alberti, the ideal Renaissance garden, as expressed in Tuscan villas, remained walled like the medieval garden, but was built on the sloping ground common to Tuscany, so that the surrounding landscape could be seen over the walls and admired from the loggias and porticoes of the villa.<sup>32</sup> This outward-looking quality of the Renaissance garden is representative of a wider shift from the cloistered attitude of the Middle Ages to the broadening mind of the Renaissance. Gardens of this period borrowed from classical Rome basic shapes, forms, and scale, as well as the union of art and nature, with the inclusion of garden temples, statuary, and other architectural forms, following the writings of Roman villa gardeners in the letters of Pliny the Younger (ca. 100 CE).<sup>33</sup>

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Publishing Co., 1994; Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1994); Wengel, *Art of Gardening*.

<sup>29</sup> Clifford, *History of Garden Design*.

<sup>30</sup> Lois Fichner-Rathus, *Understanding Art*, 3rd ed. (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1992).

<sup>31</sup> Christopher Thacker, *The History of Gardens* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1979); Richard Tarnas, *The Passion of the Western Mind: Understanding the Ideas That Have Shaped Our World View* (New York: Ballantine, 1991).

<sup>32</sup> Thacker, *History of Gardens*.

<sup>33</sup> Clifford, *History of Garden Design*; Wengel, *Art of Gardening*; Crowe, *Garden Design*.

The characteristic form of the early Renaissance Tuscan villa garden developed in an environment of hilly terrain, a hot, sunny climate, a fondness for classical statuary, a growing aesthetic sensibility, and a desire for the garden to serve a social function in concert with the house.<sup>34</sup> The result was a garden with terraces leading up to the house and structures that provided shade in contrast to the sunny views, within an architectural and formal design.<sup>35</sup> Terraces accommodated the hillside terrain, but they also provided views across the countryside and served to welcome guests.<sup>36</sup> According to Alberti's ideal, the terraces should gently lead guests up to the house, with an almost imperceptible gain in elevation, culminating in an surprise at the beauty of the view of garden and countryside found at the top.<sup>37</sup> Typically, this view stretched out in a main symmetrical axis from the house across the terraces below, flanked by trees planted in a grove. Secondary vistas across each terrace complemented the main axis, to create a formal overall design.<sup>38</sup>

The need for shade in the hot Tuscan climate was addressed by the use of structures such as the portico, a column-supported roof attached to a house as a porch, often as a main entrance; the pergola, a trellis-covered walkway with vines, usually placed along the side paths; and the grotto, a recess or artificial cave, often with dripping water or a spring, and mythological statuary.<sup>39</sup> In addition, much of the garden flanking the main axis was wooded with "bosco" or "bosche," in the manner of ancient sacred groves.<sup>40</sup> Protection from the sun often formed views of the the garden

<sup>26</sup> Crowe, *Garden Design*; Clifford, *History of Garden Design*.

<sup>35</sup> Crowe, *Garden Design*; Clifford, *History of Garden Design*.

<sup>36</sup> Clifford, *History of Garden Design*; Wengel, *Art of Gardening*.

<sup>37</sup> Thacker, *History of Gardens*.

<sup>38</sup> Crowe, *Garden Design*.

<sup>39</sup> Roger Phillips and Nicky Foy, *A Photographic Garden History* (New York: Random House, 1995); Naomi Miller, "Grotto," in *The Oxford Companion to Gardens*, ed. Patrick Goode and Michael Lancaster (Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 1986); Sir Geoffrey Jellicoe, "Pergola," in *The Oxford Companion to Gardens*; Thacker, *History of Gardens*.

<sup>40</sup> Sir Geoffrey Jellicoe, "Bosco," in *The Oxford Companion to Gardens*.

and countryside that were “deep clefts cut into the surrounding shade,” creating a landscape of strong verticality and dramatic framed views.<sup>41</sup>

After Lorenzo de Medici died in 1492, the “engine-room of the Renaissance” moved from Florence to Rome, and the nature of the Renaissance garden took on some changes.<sup>42</sup> The most significant event influence this new period of the Italian Renaissance garden was the commissioning in 1503, by Pope Julius II, of architect Donato Bramante to link the Vatican with the Belvedere, a villa high on a steep hill to the north of the Vatican.<sup>43</sup> Bramante’s solution to the problem of a hill far too steep for Alberti’s gradual ascent was “a magnificent arrangement of staircases and balustrading [that] not only provided access from one level to the next but built up a great architectural feature.”<sup>44</sup> Grand ornamental staircases became one of the hallmarks of Italian gardens, along with two other features: water play and art display.

Water took on an important role in the Italian Renaissance garden. Whereas the medieval garden had a simple central well or fountain for practical as much as ornamental purposes, the use of moving water, adopted largely from Moorish Spain, became increasingly complex in Renaissance Italy, with elaborate fountains, pools, springs in grottoes, cascades, and water staircases.<sup>45</sup> Water tricks, such as the spraying of unsuspecting guests from hidden spigots, became quite popular. As the Renaissance led into the Mannerist and Baroque periods, water play became still more complex and theatrical. The most extravagant use of water in this way may be the Villa d’Este in Tivoli, near Rome. Features included an Organ Fountain, which produced

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<sup>41</sup> Crowe, *Garden Design*, 29.

<sup>42</sup> Clifford, *History of Garden Design*, 35.

<sup>43</sup> Clifford, *History of Garden Design*.

<sup>44</sup> Clifford, *History of Garden Design*, 36.

<sup>45</sup> Clifford, *History of Garden Design*; Thacker, *History of Gardens*.



sound by the water pressure against cylinders, water-powered performing statuary, the Hundred Fountains Terrace, and the Water Theater.<sup>46</sup>

In addition to ornamental staircases and waterworks, Italian Renaissance gardens reflected the popularity of recovered classical Roman statuary.<sup>47</sup> The extensive use of these statues in the garden, even the construction of gardens for this purpose, demonstrates how the desire for the display of art led to the use of gardens as outdoor museums, fitting with the Renaissance tendency to merge forms of the arts and humanities that we now generally consider distinct. The gardens of the Italian Renaissance were philosophized by painters, commissioned by popes, built by artist-architects, populated by mythological figures, and decorated by hydraulic engineers. The Renaissance garden was a work of stone and water, in which “nature and architecture are harmoniously balanced.”<sup>48</sup>

### **Baroque**

As the sixteenth century progressed, the Renaissance gave way in Italy and other parts of Europe to the periods art historians have termed the “Mannerist” and the “Baroque,” in the context of the political, cosmological, and theological upheavals of the Copernican revolution and the Protestant Reformation.<sup>49</sup> In 1517, Luther posted his 95 theses and sparked the Protestant Reformation; in 1527, German mercenaries sacked Rome; in 1543, Copernicus published his theory of a Heliocentric universe; in 1563 the Council of Trent completed its redefinition of doctrine as part of the Catholic reform of the Counter-Reformation; and throughout Europe in the sixteenth century, wars raged as political and ecclesiastical authority was contested and reformulated.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Gabrielle van Zuylen, *Paradise on Earth: The Gardens of Western Europe* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1994); Phillips and Foy, *Photographic Garden History*; Bazin, *Paradeisos*.

<sup>47</sup> Clifford, *History of Garden Design*.

<sup>48</sup> van Zuylen, *Paradise on Earth*, 52.

<sup>49</sup> Fichner-Rathus, *Understanding Art*; Bazin, *Paradeisos*.

<sup>50</sup> Craig, *Heritage of World Civilizations*; Kishlansky, *Civilization in the West*.

In this unsettled environment, the arts shifted from the calm, classical style of the Renaissance to more extreme forms, with less realism along with more ornate, fantastic, or twisted forms.<sup>51</sup> Mannerism, at the end of the sixteenth century, began this movement, which was continued and expanded in the Baroque period of the 17th and 18th centuries, including the extremely ornate and light-hearted Rococo style of the end of the period.<sup>52</sup> In the garden, this was expressed in increasingly elaborate water features (such as the famous Water Organ at the Villa d'Este), massive architectural constructions, the abundant use of mythological figures, exaggerated use of ornamentation and embellishments, a strong theatrical character, a fashion for using materials in ways contrary to their nature, and a taste for exhibitions of cleverness.<sup>53</sup>

An example of Italian Baroque gardening that demonstrates these characteristics is Isola Bella, an island garden in Lake Maggiore, in the Italian Alps. It was completed in 1671 after forty years of construction. The island was a barren rock crag, the perfect setting to address the Baroque desire to overcome the impossible and to leave onlookers astonished at the cleverness of the accomplishment. The garden, which still exists, consists of ten terraces, carved into the rock or extended out onto the lake on pillars, so that the entire island has been transformed. Clifford describes the spectacle:<sup>54</sup>

Isola Bella resembles a bizarre many-decked flower-laden ship. Each terrace is balustraded and heavily garnished with vases and statues. On the highest terrace is a mount which serves as background for an elaborate architectural water theater. The whole garden is theatrical, an unequal stage setting for some poetic romance.

The Italian garden, as a force in history, is therefore the garden of the Renaissance and the Baroque. These gardens broke free of the inwardness of the medieval garden, set a new standard for the social use of the garden, brought classical

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<sup>51</sup> Bazin, *Paradeisos*.

<sup>52</sup> Fichner-Rathus, *Understanding Art*.

<sup>53</sup> Clifford, *History of Garden Design*; Bazin, *Paradeisos*.

<sup>54</sup> Clifford, *History of Garden Design*, 44.

forms and values back into common use, and moved beyond these classical values to a more ornate and outrageous Baroque. While Italy was the center of influence for garden design in the Renaissance, this influence waned during the Baroque, as the latter style of garden spread to other parts of Europe, and Italy lost its role as a cultural leader to its northern neighbors.

### **The French Classical Garden**

In France, the artistic evolution of the garden strayed from the Mannerist-Baroque path of the Italians, and the resulting new French neoclassicism had become the rage for gardens in many parts of Europe by the turn of the eighteenth century. Instead of following the Italian movement toward the ornate superficiality of the Baroque, French gardens expressed the extreme rationality of the Scientific Revolution, along with the glories of a royal court not found in Italy. This was the era of mathematician-philosopher René Descartes and of Louis XIV, “Le Roi Soleil,” the “Sun King,” who reigned from 1643 to 1715. These two French figures represent the rationalist, transcendental world view that found expression in what was to become the quintessential French garden.

Descartes, who lived in France in the first half of the seventeenth century, is often considered the founder of modern philosophy, with his rational dualism of mind and body.<sup>55</sup> The Cartesian world is rational, mechanistic, impersonal, and mathematically predictable, observed from afar by the powerful human mind. This philosopher’s vision brought about the ascendancy of objectivity in modern thought, and this translated into the intensely formal garden of neoclassical France that resonated with newly exalted position of the human mind.

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<sup>55</sup> Stanley M. Honer and Thomas C. Hunt, *Invitation to Philosophy: Issues and Options* (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 1987); Tarnas, *The Passion of the Western Mind*.

Descartes wrote, in 1640, in explanation of his famous “*cogito*,” “I think, therefore I am,”<sup>56</sup>

Simply by knowing that I exist and seeing at the same time that absolutely nothing else belongs to my nature or essence except that I am a thinking thing, I can infer correctly that my essence consists solely in the fact that I am a thinking thing. It is true that I may have a body that is very closely joined to me. But nevertheless, .... it is certain that I am really distinct from my body, and can exist without it.

This chasm Descartes created between mind and body (“corpus”) had a drastic effect on how the world was understood, and how it is still understood. The human as a “thinking thing” stands apart from the physical world, with no fundamental need even of his/her own body. Body, world, nature became a machine, a mechanism to be observed and studied from the lofty heights of the human mind. The mind became the ultimate reality, independent of and superior to the merely physical. Here was a very different humanism than the Renaissance embrace of worldliness; it is in some ways a return to the medieval heaven and earth dualism, but the religious notion of heaven above had been replaced by a secular notion of the transcendent mind. In the garden, this was expressed in a strict rationalism in gardening, with rigid, straight lines and geometric shapes: a garden completely under control.

This transcendent perspective of the French enlightenment was reinforced by the attitudes of absolute monarchy of Louis XIV. He called himself the Sun King, an appellation serving to identify himself with the Greek sun god Apollo, and his approach to the land was aimed toward cementing his own position of absolute, transcendent power. The gardens of his palace at Versailles, which functioned as his royal court, embodied these values of supreme rationality and grand transcendence. The gardens at Versailles, designed by the master landscape architect of the French style, André Le

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<sup>56</sup> René Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy*, trans. John Cottingham (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1986 [1640]), 54.

Nôtre, became the model upon which more modest neoclassical gardens throughout Europe were based, the ultimate expression of the French classical style.

The French Classical garden, reflecting a rational, ordered world spread out at the feet of the king and before the throne of the human mind, therefore utilized space and manipulated nature in a different way than its predecessor, the Italian garden, or other Western styles. It was no longer the personal, intimate space of the Tuscan garden shared with friends, and was instead an abstract space of geometry designed to follow the laws of optics and to impress the royal court.<sup>57</sup> Whereas the Italian garden was to be viewed from ground level and to be moved through, the French garden was best viewed from above to see all the intricacies of the radial lines, geometric patterns and partitioning of space. The parterre, a garden plot partitioned by low clipped hedges, became a defining element of French gardening that demonstrates the love of controlled space. The parterre was a form adopted from Italy, but under French classicism it became more intricate and lost any flowers that might distract from the pattern. In its extreme, the “parterre de broderie” copied the fine patterning of embroidery, one example of the many uses of space and optics dominating the French classical style.

Another example of the French reformulation of Renaissance ideas is the new use to which the axis was put. Like the typical Italian garden, the French garden had a main axis that drew the eye outward. In the context of a scientific world in the which the new astronomy had displaced the earth from the center of existence and shattered belief in a finite universe, the axis of the grand French garden did not merely draw the eye to a distant viewpoint, but forced it beyond distance, to infinity.<sup>58</sup> The enormous

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<sup>57</sup> Bazin, *Paradeisos*.

<sup>58</sup> Michael Baridon, “The Scientific Imagination and the Baroque Garden,” *Studies in the History of Gardens & Designed Landscapes* 18, no. 1 (Spring 1998).

garden was to be seen as a whole, at a gasp.<sup>59</sup> The large scale of the French garden was enhanced by the natural terrain, much flatter than in Italy, contributing to a horizontality of design that contrasted to the verticality of the Italian garden.

In this horizontal garden, water play took on a very different character than in the cascades of the hillside gardens of Italy. Fountains were the source of moving water: the Sun King used them extensively at Versailles, with some fourteen hundred water jets installed.<sup>60</sup> Without the gravity of steep terrain, however, these fountains could not all be run simultaneously and constantly as in Italy; as Louis walked through the grounds, they would often be turned on and off according to his location.<sup>61</sup> In addition to fountains, the French garden often contained large sheets of water, contributing to horizontality and scale, while using optics to calculate the effects of reflection from precise locations.

The French garden is clearly less intimate and more open than the Italian, although it contains some similar elements. Topiary, which often took the form of animals in Italian gardens, became geometric. The Classical French garden was a landscape of the mind, an extreme that led inexorably to a reaction.

### **The Garden After 1700: England and the United States**

The reaction to the perceived excesses of French neoclassicism took shape in England, under the growth of Romanticism and literary figures such as Alexander Pope, and the English garden became as influential as the Italian and French forms before it. As the garden belonged to Italy in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries and to France in the seventeenth, it was England that captured the garden in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The English garden ruthlessly dismantled the formality and

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<sup>59</sup> Clifford, *History of Garden Design*.

<sup>60</sup> Stuart Crouner, prod. "Gardens of the World: the Formal Garden," with Audrey Hepburn (Perennial Productions for Home & Garden TV, 1993).

<sup>61</sup> Thacker, *History of Gardens*.

geometry of the preceding styles, building in their stead “landscape” gardens that mimicked a natural ideal.

## Romanticism

Romanticism was a movement in literature, philosophy, and the arts that embraced nature as an organic whole to be known subjectively, spiritually, and emotionally rather than as a machine to be known rationally. Tarnas calls Romanticism another “temperament” that expressed “just the aspects of human experience suppressed by the Enlightenment’s overriding spirit of rationalism.”<sup>62</sup> The new Romantic perspective thrived alongside the Enlightenment paradigm, developing such themes as the spirituality of nature, the picturesque, the pastoral, and the sublime.

While still drawing on the traditions of classical and Renaissance humanism, Romanticism took its cues from much different elements of those traditions than did the neoclassicism of seventeenth-century France. This alternative interpretation of classicism and humanism is demonstrated in the Romantic views of man/woman and of nature. In both cases, Romantic thought played a counterpoint to neoclassical sensibilities.

The Romantic conceptualization of man/woman was as a being not limited to the supremely rational Cartesian image, but instead exhibiting a wide range of qualities that extended beyond the predictable, rational person. Emotional and spiritual capacities were combined with the intellectual, and man/woman was seen as an artistic, imaginative, subjective figure for whom individual self-expression and creativity, subjectivity, inspiration, and the unconscious became critical.<sup>63</sup> Romanticism did not simply oppose the Cartesian-classical understanding of man/woman, exchanging a

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<sup>62</sup> Tarnas, *Passion of the Western Mind*, 366.

<sup>63</sup> Philip P. Wiener, ed. *Dictionary of the History of Ideas* (New York: Scribner, 1973), s.v. “Romanticism,” by James Gutmann; Tarnas, *Passion of the Western Mind*.

rational view of humanity with an irrational one, but rather extended the range of human experience and character to embrace extra-rational qualities, placing reason in a secondary role. While remaining humanistic, the Romantic perspective conceptualized man/woman as a smaller piece in the cosmos, while nature took on a larger meaning.

“Nature” became a focus for Romanticism, a larger-than-life reference point beyond humanity that provided meaning and inspiration. The Romantics rejected the neoclassical understanding of nature as a mechanistic object to be held up to scrutiny under the transcendent human mind. Romantic nature itself took over the lofty position above man/woman. Nature was now as an organic whole and a source of poetic, artistic, and spiritual revelation and mystery, as well as scientific insight.<sup>64</sup> It lost its place beneath the microscope of science and took up a position similar to that of the ancient Greek and Roman gods to which the Romantics often referred, a position both lofty and dynamic, unpredictable and enriching. Most importantly, it was a nature not under the thumb of human control. The geometric analogy, an abstract organizing construct of the mind, was no longer an adequate paradigm for nature. The very comprehensibility of the neoclassical idea was contrary to the Romantic mind, according to which nature was transcendent over humans, taking on divine proportions and encompassing a sense of mystery and grandeur that would never be entirely comprehensible.<sup>65</sup>

The idea of the “picturesque,” associated with the Romantic vision of nature and with the landscape garden, helps to illustrate how these Romantic conceptual abstractions were applied. “Picturesque” refers to a sense of aesthetics inspired by the works and principles of landscape painting. In particular, English Romanticism was influenced by the landscape paintings of Nicolas Poussin and Claude Lorrain, two

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<sup>64</sup> Tarnas, *Passion of the Western Mind*.

<sup>65</sup> Roderick Nash, *Wilderness and the American Mind*, 3rd ed. (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1982).



French artists who worked in Rome in the seventeenth century.<sup>66</sup> These paintings were in turn an expression of the traditions of the “pastoral” and “Arcadian,” literary forms of rural nostalgia linked to classical and mythological Greece and Rome.<sup>67</sup>

While Arcadia may be found on a map, as a region of the Greek Peloponnesus, it is the legendary, mythological, and metaphorical Arcadia that made its way into the Romantic mind via the neoclassical extension of the Renaissance revival of the Hellenistic poetry of Theocritus and Virgil.<sup>68</sup> Arcadia is a primitivist metaphor that evokes an idyllic image of a pre-civilization life in harmony with a fruitful and abundant nature.<sup>69</sup> The scenes portray, whether by the poet’s pen or the painter’s brush, a rustic rural life of shepherds, satyrs, and nymphs, frequently invoking the wild, sensual figure of Pan, the resident deity of Arcadia.<sup>70</sup> The Arcadia of Theocritus, writing in the third century B.C.E., is rough and wild, with Arcadians as rather savage figures among the olive groves and vineyards, as Pan represents the idea of “nature embracing raw and rampant sexuality.”<sup>71</sup> Two hundred years later, Virgil’s Arcadia is much tamer, a “blissful pastoral world bathed in an elegiac glow,” all savagery erased, and the sexuality of Pan is transformed into a vaguer, milder “spontaneous fecundity of nature itself.”<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> Clifford, *History of Garden Design*; Margaretha Rossholm Lagerlöf, *Ideal Landscape: Annibale Carracci, Nicolas Poussin and Claude Lorrain* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1990).

<sup>67</sup> Paul Alpers, *What Is Pastoral?* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1996); Lagerlöf, *Ideal Landscape*; Simon Schama, *Landscape and Memory* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1995).

<sup>68</sup> Lagerlöf, *Ideal Landscape*; Schama, *Landscape and Memory*.

<sup>69</sup> Lagerlöf, *Ideal Landscape*.

<sup>70</sup> Thomas Bulfinch, *The Golden Age of Myth & Legend* (Ware, Hertfordshire, England: Wordsworth Reference, 1993); Lagerlöf, *Ideal Landscape*; Schama, *Landscape and Memory*.

<sup>71</sup> Lagerlöf, *Ideal Landscape*, 6; Schama, *Landscape and Memory*.

<sup>72</sup> Lagerlöf, *Ideal Landscape*, 9; Schama, *Landscape and Memory*, 528.

In the landscape paintings of Poussin and Claude, this pastoral vision of nature became itself a subject of art, along with human and mythological figures representing a relationship with that nature. The subject matter of these paintings was usually dramatic, with human action taking place in an ancient classical, mythological, or Biblical setting.<sup>73</sup> The painting titles demonstrate these themes: Poussin's "Landscape with St. John on Patmos," or Claude's "Temple of Bacchus," etc. While the scenes often depicted scenes of ancient Greece or Israel, the landscapes were taken from the Roman countryside, with buildings based on ancient Roman ruins. Nature was, then, broadly defined, to include not only wild nature, but the cultivated nature of the pastoral scene, the wildness of Pan and his cohorts, and even monumental buildings. The picturesque aesthetic proceeding from these landscape paintings valued the nostalgia of and idealized pastoral life as a golden age of harmony with the natural world. The pastoral aesthetic followed not only the content and form, but also the symbolic meaning represented in the literary and artistic Arcadian tradition.

The constellation of meaning surrounding the Arcadian metaphor traces a temporal line from Hellenistic Greece, through Theocritus and Virgil, to the humanist revival of the Renaissance, to the neoclassical world of the seventeenth-century landscape painters, and to the Romantic movement of eighteenth-century England. The meaningful use of pastoral landscapes embraced a sensual image of rural life, a dramatic image of human fate, emotions, and actions upon the land, a utopian image of perfect harmony with nature, and a metaphysical image of a link between nature and the human soul visible in the pictorial world.<sup>74</sup> Arcadian metaphor reached over the centuries and across the European continent to spark the imagination of such English Romantic poets

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<sup>73</sup> Lagerlöf, *Ideal Landscape*.

<sup>74</sup> Lagerlöf, *Ideal Landscape*.

as Pope, Wordsworth, Blake, and Coleridge, and to inspire the new-old English vision of the landscape garden, an artistic-literary image turned tangible.

William Wordsworth (1770-1850) was an English poet whose work demonstrates the ideals of Romanticism and its approach toward nature. The following excerpt from his poem, "Lines Composed A Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey," is indicative of the impulses of the Romantic view of nature as it relates to humankind.<sup>75</sup>

And I have felt  
A presence that disturbs me with the joy  
Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime  
Of something far more deeply interfused,  
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,  
And the round ocean and the living air,  
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man:  
A motion and a spirit, that impels  
All thinking things, all objects of all thought,  
And rolls through all things, Therefore I am still  
A lover of the meadows and the woods ...

Elements of this excerpt that participate in the themes of Romanticism include emotion, individual experience, intuition, unity with nature, and a sense of higher meaning or spirituality found in that union. The individuality and embrace of emotions in the phrase "I have felt" are found throughout the poem as a whole, as Wordsworth writes to his sister of his reactions and connections with the landscape he describes. That landscape is, for the poet, a source, or a spark, of an intuitive type of knowledge, as intuition alone is capable of grasping a "presence," a "sense sublime," a "motion and a spirit."

True to the Romantic spirit, Wordsworth's intuition does not eliminate the mind, but captures it, casts it from its transcendent throne, and marries it with what he finds even more valuable. In this poem, thought has as great a part as emotion or spirit, as the poet writes of "the joy of elevated thoughts," "the mind of man," "all thinking

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<sup>75</sup> William Wordsworth, "Lines Composed A Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey," lines 93-103, in Alexander W. Allison, et al., eds., *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*, 3rd ed., shorter (New York and London: W.W. Norton & Company, 1970 ).

things,” and “all objects of all thought.” Yet the Cartesian apple-cart is plainly upset, for Wordsworth’s “thought” is thoroughly entwined with a “sense” not objective, but “sublime.” Descartes’ fundamental, distilled truth of the self as a “thinking thing,” independent of nature, and even of the human body, is wrenched from the grasp of objectivism and plunged into the dirty waters of some Romantic “spirit.”<sup>76</sup>

Wordsworth takes the very phrase so central to Descartes’ thought, the “thinking thing,” and redefines it, replacing the rational with the relational. No longer allowing thought the independent luxury of individuality, Wordsworth brings “all thinking things” together in an interactive pluralism and proceeds to enmesh that plural subject with its objects. Further, he weaves throughout a mysterious spirit that connects all things. For Wordsworth, it is this pervasive spirit, or “motion,” that provokes the best the mind has to offer: “a presence that disturbs me with the joy of elevated thoughts.”

Thus Wordsworth returns from thought to the nature with which he began the poem, the two inextricably joined, with “something far more deeply interfused.” This mysterious “something” is the deeper spiritual meaning Romanticism finds in nature. This Romantic impulse is strong, approaching a worship of nature or a pantheism.<sup>77</sup> Nature, through the lens of Romanticism, is “a live vessel of spirit, a translucent source of mystery and revelation.”<sup>78</sup> This places it far beyond the “object of all thought,” and makes sense of the animated condemnation of the dead, objective nature of the Cartesian-Enlightenment-scientific perspective. This view of nature, contrasting so sharply with the French neoclassical view, understandingly demanded a new expression, a new ideal, of what is the garden. The Romantic understanding of nature,

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<sup>76</sup> Descartes, *Meditations*.

<sup>77</sup> Alan Grob, *The Philosophic Mind: A Study of Wordsworth’s Poetry and Thought, 1797-1805* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1973).

<sup>78</sup> Tarnas, *Passion of the Western Mind*, 367.

as holistic, spiritual, emotional, pastoral, nostalgic, intuitive, dramatic, picturesque, mysterious, and active, stood behind the call to reject the “artificial” formalism of French gardening and to create gardens modeled after “nature.”

### **The English Landscape Garden**

The gardens of eighteenth-century Romantic England, which can be broadly termed “landscape” gardens, reflect many of the ideas of Romantic thought, while two of these ideas were particularly definitive: the gardens were to be more “natural” than the formal gardens that preceded them, and they were to be picturesque, to look like pictures.<sup>79</sup> These English landscape gardens were a product not only of the Romantic movement, but also of the growing popularity of the country manor, in similarity to the situation of the Tuscan villa, albeit in a very different climate and environment. Landscape gardens were also a reaction to the perceived excesses and rigid authoritarianism of the formal garden.

In the effort to create gardens that were natural and picturesque, two revolutionary developments in garden design were key: the invention of the “ha-ha” and the idea of the belt-walk. The first of these, the “ha-ha,” spoke to the desire to eliminate the sharp distinction between the “artificial” garden and the “natural” countryside, a distinction that was demarcated by fences and walls. The ha-ha was a hidden trench that served the function of a fence, keeping the livestock out of the garden and away from the house, while interposing no visible interruption between the garden and the countryside. Such a sunken barrier eliminated the need for a raised barrier, thus “leaping the fence”<sup>80</sup> so that all the countryside became the garden, and the garden was able to merge with the nature to be found beyond its bounds.

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<sup>79</sup> Clifford, *History of Garden Design*.

<sup>80</sup> Horace Walpole, quoted in Thacker, *History of Gardens*, and Clifford, *History of Garden Design*.

The second development enabling the landscape garden to address the theoretical requirements of naturalism and the picturesque was the belt walk, consisting of an irregular band of trees along the perimeter of an estate, with a path along its extent. The function of the country walk, a decidedly English pastime, merged with landscape form in this style of garden.<sup>81</sup> The belt walk provided a series of views, or “pictures,” that offered changing points of view and a variation of perspective across the garden and toward the house as well as from the house itself. The effect was a strong sense of movement, as strolling became a primary activity in the English garden.<sup>82</sup>

In the pursuit of a more natural garden, the theorists and practitioners of the landscape style eliminated the regularity, geometry, and symmetry of the formal garden, along with the fences and walls.<sup>83</sup> One influential idea was the revival of the Roman concept of “genius loci,” the guardian spirit of place, which became now the character of a place.<sup>84</sup> The idea was to take into account the individuality of the site, in contrast to the “drawing board” approach of the abstract geometrical plan of the formal garden.<sup>85</sup> This did not preclude, however, drastic changes to the site to create lakes, level hills, create artificial hills, or even to raze entire villages that were in the way of the view.<sup>86</sup> Nevertheless, the English landscape garden was a step away from the grid-like geometrical qualities of a garden such as Versailles, and toward a more naturalistic aesthetic.

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<sup>81</sup> Clifford, *History of Garden Design*.

<sup>82</sup> Crowe, *Garden Design*.

<sup>83</sup> Bazin, *Paradeisos*.

<sup>84</sup> Christian Norberg-Schulz, *Genius Loci: Towards a Phenomenology of Architecture* (New York: Rizzoli, 1979).

<sup>85</sup> Clifford, *History of Garden Design*.

<sup>86</sup> Bazin, *Paradeisos*.

The landscape garden as a generally defined category of can be further divided into four types which proceed from the shared ideals of naturalism and the picturesque: the Arcadian, eclectic-literary, sublime, and “total landscape” gardens. While the Arcadian garden dominated the early-to-middle part of the eighteenth century, the other three types developed in the later, out of these early landscape gardens.

Following the theoretical writings of early English Romantics such as Pope, Shaftsbury, and Addison, William Kent (1683-1748) became the leading figure in the design of gardens in the landscape style that may be termed “Arcadian-picturesque.” This is the style that most closely followed the pastoral Arcadian ideal from the landscape paintings of Poussin and Claude. The garden landscapes consisted primarily of hills, trees, water features, lawn, and architectural elements.<sup>87</sup> The trees were generally in the belt walk as well as in copses near a lake and dotted about the landscape. Statues and small buildings focused the scenes created from each successive, carefully designed viewpoint.

The buildings, and often the main house as well, were of classical or gothic design, symbolizing an ideal past of either ancient classical or gothic inspiration. Classical architecture was often Palladian, after the style of Renaissance Italian architect Andrea Palladio (1518-80), whose balanced, exacting classical designs show that geometry had not been entirely rejected. Otherwise the buildings would probably be imitations of Roman ruins depicted in the paintings of Claude and Poussin.<sup>88</sup> One particular Roman ruin, a circular temple known as the temple of the Sybil, was introduced to England by Kent and became the most imitated ancient building in landscape gardens, with over twenty in England and still more on the continent, as the English landscape style spread.<sup>89</sup> These classical buildings and other structures were

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<sup>87</sup> Crowe, *Garden Design*.

<sup>88</sup> Jellicoe, *The Landscape of Man*; Thacker, *History of Gardens*.

sometimes built in their ruined form and other times as complete. The scenes in these ideal landscapes often evoked classical mythology, with features such as the valley of the Elysian fields (the equivalent of heaven in Greek mythology), Venus' Vale, the river Styx, the statue of Apollo, or the temple of Ancient Virtue. Gothic scenes arose beside the classical as the gothic revival of the 1740's and 1750's was fired by nationalist sentiment for a great Britain past. Each successive scene, classical or gothic, was associated both with nature and with an idealized past.

The simple garden forms in which the scenes of the Arcadian-picturesque garden are set, with a belt walk and tree-dotted lawns in undulated shapes around an irregular lake, is a reflection of the naturalistic principle. Kent's dictum "nature abhors a straight line" became a dogmatic theory of "the wavy line of beauty," according to which all straight lines and geometric shapes were eventually swept away in favor of undulating lines and smooth shapes.<sup>90</sup> While Kent's Claudian ideal waned after the 1760's, the wavy line of beauty held throughout the eighteenth century, as the unified Arcadian style of Kent fragmented into the other three landscape styles: the eclectic-literary, the sublime, and the "total landscape."

The eclectic-literary garden was a variation of the landscape garden in which the scenes, no longer limited to the classical or gothic, were intended to convey a particular atmosphere and to evoke the associated emotional response. The sense of ambiance and subjectivity are clearly Romantic, as is the rejection of elements associated with formality. Statuary was shunned as suspect due to its association with formal gardens, and the emphasis was given over to architectural elements called "follies."

A folly is a type of ornamental garden structure that is characterized by excess and eccentricity, often conspicuous, and costly, and usually of no practical use, such as

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<sup>89</sup> Thacker, *History of Gardens*.

<sup>90</sup> Clifford, *History of Garden Design*, 154.



an obelisk or pagoda.<sup>91</sup> A list of follies from the garden at Stowe illustrates the eclecticism of the form: Egyptian pyramid, Italian belvedere, Saxon temple, Chinese house, temple of Ancient Virtue, Corinthian arch, shepherd's hut, island tomb (a real tomb), Palladian bridge, and temples of Venus, Conrad, Victory, and Friendship.<sup>92</sup> One very popular folly was the hermitage, in which a hired "hermit" might have dwelt, required by his employer to grow his hair and nails long and to wear rags. The theatrical, ornamental quality of this garden style connects it to the Baroque garden elsewhere in Europe.

Each scene, with its folly, was intended to evoke a particular sentiment, in a sense of stage drama reminiscent of the productions of the Sun King, but at an intimate scale more suitable to Romantic tastes. One sentiment followed upon another, in a potentially dizzying array: there might be an ivy clad gothic ruin with a full moon to evoke the spirit of the rough northern barbarian, a classical portico for the sense of a superior cultural tradition, an alarming chasm full of bones for a bit of horror, or a tomb inscribed "Et in Arcadia Ego" to be pondered as did the shepherds in Poussin's painting of the same name.<sup>93</sup>

"Allegorical clutter," as Schama calls this style, depended on literary, mythological, historical, and poetic allusion.<sup>94</sup> A statue which in Renaissance Italy would have been primarily art, with a few incidental associations, would be in the eclectic-literary garden nine-tenths associational. As time passed, however, the eclectic scenes lost their evocativeness and became merely spectacle, as each garden designer sought for what would be more exotic and grotesque than the last.<sup>95</sup> Thacker

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<sup>91</sup> George Carter, "Folly," in *The Oxford Companion to Gardens*.

<sup>92</sup> Bazin, *Paradeisos*.

<sup>93</sup> Clifford, *History of Garden Design*; Lagerlöf, *Ideal Landscape*.

<sup>94</sup> Schama, *Landscape and Memory*, 539. Clifford, *History of Garden Design*.

<sup>95</sup> Clifford, *History of Garden Design*.

observes that these gardens acquired “such a miscellany, such a jumble of buildings and monuments, in such a diversity of styles so thoughtless juxtaposed that the landscapes in which they are built lack coherence.”<sup>96</sup> Ironically, the artificiality so condemned in the formal garden had come full circle into the landscape garden.

The third style of landscape garden, contemporary with the eclectic-literary garden in the latter eighteenth century, is the sublime-picturesque garden. While this garden shares the ideas of the picturesque with the earlier landscape gardens of William Kent, it is based not on the Arcadian aesthetic, but instead on the “sublime.”<sup>97</sup> The primitivism of the Romantic movement is expressed in this style, with sense of the ideal past concentrated upon northern Europe rather than on the classicism of the southern part of the continent.

Edmund Burke’s 1757 work *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* became one of the preeminent theoretical statements on aesthetics during the Romantic period.<sup>98</sup> Burke distinguishes between the beautiful and the sublime as two alternative aesthetic modes. Beauty he considers to be smooth, delicate, graceful, clear, mild, and pleasant, associated with emotions such as love and compassion. The sublime, which he believes to be a stronger passion, is rugged, vast, dark, gloomy, rough, and threatening, associated with emotions such as fear and awe. The sublime finds its source in pain and danger, which when too near or threatening “are incapable of giving any delight, and are simply too terrible; but at certain distances ... they may be, and they are delightful.”<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>96</sup> Thacker, *History of Gardens*, 209.

<sup>97</sup> Thacker, *History of Gardens*.

<sup>98</sup> Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*, ed. with introduction by James T. Boulton (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1958 [1757]).

<sup>99</sup> Burke, *The Sublime and Beautiful*, 40.

Burke reasoned that the sublime created admiration, reverence, respect, and, most importantly, “astonishment.”<sup>100</sup>

that state of the soul, in which its motions are suspended, with some degree of horror. In this case the mind is so entirely filled with its object, that it cannot entertain any other, nor by consequence reason on that object which employs it. Hence arises the great power of the sublime, that far from being produced by them, it anticipates our reasonings, and hurries us on by an irresistible force.

Astonishment, therefore, is a passion by which reason is overcome and emotion takes over. As the thrill of a good fright, it can be seen still in contemporary culture, in roller coasters, horror movies, or thrillers. Burke’s theory of astonishment gave the sublime a strong appeal for the Romantic mind in its quest to overturn the rationalism of the Enlightenment and to connect to the emotions in turn linked to the soul. The sublime, in association with nature, became part of the call to naturalism in landscape gardens. Kent’s landscapes, as well as the later “total landscape” gardens, were seen as unnaturally tidy, lacking the gnarled, distorted, and broken forms considered more natural.<sup>101</sup>

The landscape gardens of the sublime-picturesque type thus followed a very different ideal than the smooth, classical Arcadian style. Wild, broken, or struggling forms, such as two trees planted so closely so as to battle for the space, were combined with architectural elements with more primitive, northern-European barbarian ideal: gothic ruins, stone circles like Stonehenge, hermitages, wild grottoes, etc.<sup>102</sup> The sublime garden was a different interpretation of the two fundamentals of English landscape gardening: naturalism and the picturesque.

The fourth style of landscape garden, the “total landscape,” arose from about 1750 under the hand of one of the pre-eminent figures in all Western landscape

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<sup>100</sup> Burke, *The Sublime and Beautiful*, 57.

<sup>101</sup> Clifford, *History of Garden Design*.

<sup>102</sup> Thacker, *History of Gardens*.

gardening: Lancelot “Capability” Brown (1716-83). Brown may be considered the successor to Kent, but he far exceeded his predecessor, creating many more gardens and cementing the place of the English landscape garden as one of the great garden styles of the world.<sup>103</sup> Brown presided over the rise of the landscape garden, which became wildly popular as the art of gardening rose to a position of high esteem in English society, and as the English garden style spread to continental Europe. The last thirty years of his life saw Brown at the top of his field, with no serious rivals in garden design.<sup>104</sup>

Brown’s gardens represent the ultimate expression of the landscape garden, taken as far as the form would allow. His landscapes were simpler than the Arcadian, eclectic, or sublime gardens, while less picturesque and allusive.<sup>105</sup> The wavy line of beauty found its fullest expression in Brown, who swept away remaining traces of formality, eliminated nearly all statuary and follies, and reduced the number of buildings to a minimum. He used almost no color, with contrast serving only the purpose of accentuating the undulating line that remained central and absolute, eclipsing any other concerns such as emotional evocation. In the Brownian garden, the wavy line reigned supreme, in an aesthetic clearly immersed in the smoothness of beauty rather than the ruggedness of the sublime.

Brown’s landscape gardens were expert compositions of simple patterns with very few elements: long broad lawns sweeping all the way up to the house; trees in compact copses and singly scattered across the lawn, as well as in the encircling belt; winding watercourses and the irregular lake created by the damming of a stream; and artificial or natural hills. There would be a few small buildings or temples in the

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<sup>103</sup> Wengel, *Art of Gardening*.

<sup>104</sup> Dorothy Stroud, “Brown, Lancelot,” in *The Oxford Companion to Gardens*.

<sup>105</sup> Thacker, *History of Gardens*.

classical or gothic style, but nothing like the steady progression of scenes in the eclectic-literary garden.

The elements of Brown's total landscape garden were not new, but he used them in such a definitive way as to make the style his own. Brown simplified and unified the landscape garden:<sup>106</sup>

the entire scene [was] now a single, multi-dimensional composition, in which the contours of the land and the lake, and the relationship of trees and grassy lawn vary continuously as one walks onwards, experiencing not many different and separated 'pictorial compositions' but innumerable variations on a single theme.

This single theme became so definitive that it turned into a new rigid type followed repeatedly by Brown and his disciples. One claim of his critics was that his landscape gardens were insufficiently picturesque. In the latter part of the century, "picturesque" had taken on the sense of the sublime, no longer referring to the smooth pastoral scenes of the Arcadian tradition. The sublime-picturesque garden grew in the atmosphere of this critique.

Brown's critics also complained that the total landscape garden was so simplified, so empty and abstract, that it ceased to be a garden at all, merely merging with the countryside. Clifford expresses sharply this growing dissatisfaction with the garden so simplified and emptied of its elements: "A highly subjective pleasure such as the capacity (ultimately) to gaze in raptures upon nothing demands a highly cultivated subject."<sup>107</sup> As the eighteenth century drew to a close and the English became decreasingly willing to be that "highly cultivated subject," the death of Capability Brown set the scene for a new direction in English gardening.

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<sup>106</sup> Thacker, *History of Gardens*, 210.

<sup>107</sup> Clifford, *History of Garden Design*, 162.

## English Garden After 1800

The landscape garden having reached its logical conclusion in the designs of Capability Brown, the English garden experienced a significant shift from the eighteenth to the nineteenth centuries. The landscape tradition waned in favor of a style that blended formality with informality and included of a greater variety of garden elements, particularly of color, flowers, and exotic species. The new century left behind the naturalistic ideal and the theory of the picturesque, moving into a new loosely defined style, called “gardenesque.”<sup>108</sup>

The first step in the change of style was the reintroduction of formality into the garden, a task accomplished by Humphrey Repton (1752-1818), a landscape architect who began his work in 1788, shortly after the death of Brown. Repton did not break completely from Brown, but he first thickened the plantings and then, in the most revolutionary gardening act of the time, adopted a more formal style of garden near the house, while keeping the informal landscape style for the outer part of the grounds. Repton brought the flower and vegetable gardens back near the house, as well as the stables, a move that effectively overthrew the legacy of Brown and Kent.<sup>109</sup>

A characteristic feature of Repton’s gardens was a terrace walk, with balustrades and steps, overlooking the informal landscape beyond and separating the formal and informal parts of the grounds.<sup>110</sup> Repton thus created a distinction, in both his thought and his practice, between the “garden” near the house and the “park” beyond. The landscape garden therefore finds its descendents not in the garden, but in parklands, a form distinct from the garden after 1800. The twentieth-century eye would likely interpret a Brownian landscape as park rather than as garden. Frederick Law

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<sup>108</sup> T.H.D. Turner, “Gardenesque,” in *The Oxford Companion to Gardens*.

<sup>109</sup> Clifford, *History of Garden Design*.

<sup>110</sup> Clifford, *History of Garden Design*.

Olmstead's design for Central Park in New York is a familiar example of the landscape garden style turned to the park.<sup>111</sup>

The shift from picturesque to gardenesque was a shift from aesthetics to botanics: instead of the focus on painterly scenes and ornamental architecture, the growing of plants became the dominant concern. The botanic emphasis of the gardenesque brought in two major elements that had little place in the eighteenth-century English garden: flowers and exotic species. The minimalism of Brown's landscape garden was matched by excess in the nineteenth-century inclusion of flowers and exotics as ornamental interest. Color was used extensively and intensively, and flowers would be massively planted in beds surrounded by lawns, often to be replaced every season in quest of a garden in constant bloom. Exotic shrubs were another important element, as the influx of more and new varieties from the far reaches of the Empire continually fed the habits of the botanic collector. Gardening was no longer the art of creating picturesque scenes in the landscape to merge with the English countryside, but instead it was the art of growing plants and of displaying a collection that could never be mistaken for the native landscape beyond its borders.

The gardenesque garden was intended to be convenient and accessible, more inviting and prettier than the old landscape style. The lawn of mowed grass became smaller than the vast expanses of the landscape garden, dotted with exotic shrubs and trees. In addition, there were thick plantings of exotic shrubbery with winding paths, and the conservatory became an integral part of the garden. Other characteristic elements were the terrace walk and small specialized gardens, such as a rocky "alpine" garden, or Repton's "thornery" at Woburn Abbey, a collection of all known thorny plants.<sup>112</sup>

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<sup>111</sup> Thacker, *History of Gardens*.

<sup>112</sup> Clifford, *History of Garden Design*.

In style, the nineteenth-century English garden was a much freer mix than was the landscape garden. The specialized gardens were very eclectic, moving beyond the use of thematic buildings in the older eclectic-literary style, to the wider development of themed gardens. Not only buildings but also plant material and other garden elements were used to create a wide variety within and across gardens. Examples of this multiplicity of styles include Swiss gardens, Chinese and Japanese gardens, garden buildings inspired by Egypt, Greece, Rome, India, or Stonehenge, bamboo gardens, bog or heath gardens, and gardens of stumps, topiary, or dinosaurs.<sup>113</sup> The search for novelty and excitement found in the Victorian garden is reminiscent of the gardens of the Baroque. While there was no unified style, one trend that did become very popular by the 1830's was the neo-Italianate, a Renaissance revival movement, with clipped hedges, balustrades, statues, straight gravel walks, and regular pools with fountains, all around orderly displays of flowers.<sup>114</sup>

The nineteenth-century English garden reflects a broadening base of influences and an embrace of diversity, brought about by imperialism and globalization, technical innovation, and social change. By the time of Queen Victoria, who reigned from 1837 to 1901, England was the center of an empire upon which the sun never set, and the balance of English society had shifted from the aristocracy to the middle class.<sup>115</sup> The factors of globalization and social change combined with technological innovations to change the face of the English garden.

While the overseas trade of the Empire put myriad botanical specimens in reach of the English collector, it was the greenhouse and the invention of the Wardian case that allowed the foreign introductions to reach the English garden. The Wardian case

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<sup>113</sup> Thacker, *History of Gardens*; Clifford, *History of Garden Design*.

<sup>114</sup> Thacker, *History of Gardens*.

<sup>115</sup> Clifford, *History of Garden Design*.



was a sealed glass case with a self-contained ecology capable of sustaining tropical plants during a long ocean voyage to England.<sup>116</sup> The greenhouse was a larger construction on the same idea, allowing cultivation of plants that would otherwise fare poorly in the English climate. The widespread use of flowers and exotics was enabled by the innovations of the greenhouse and the Wardian case.

The rise of the middle class, along with the urbanization and suburbanization of the population, had as profound an effect on the English garden as did imperial trade.<sup>117</sup> As more people had means for more modest gardens, the fashions of English gardens followed. The invention of the lawn mower and the rise of popular horticulture magazines contributed to the middle class garden. As the population of England became more urbanized, so too did the garden, which moved from the country estate to the urban and suburban lot. This resulted in the return of the garden to its traditional form of enclosure and seclusion. The aristocracy had not abandoned the garden, however. The wildly experimental eclecticism of the nineteenth century was an aristocratic project, one that Clifford portrays as self-defensive futility.<sup>118</sup>

[they] tried a little of everything, struggling desperately, with their gardens of this and that and the other land, and of this and that and the other species of plant, to grasp and contain and hold to themselves a world that had expanded beyond their capacity to control it.

One of the effects of the shift from upper to middle class was, in the latter part of the nineteenth century, the arrival into popular awareness of a vernacular garden form that had long survived in the countryside, apart from the fashions of gardening and the tastes of the aristocracy. This vernacular form was the English cottage garden, and it has been incorporated into the vision of the twentieth-century English garden of informal plantings within a regular underlying structure.

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<sup>116</sup> Thacker, *History of Gardens*.

<sup>117</sup> Thacker, *History of Gardens*; Clifford, *History of Garden Design*.

<sup>118</sup> Clifford, *History of Garden Design*, 186.

William Robinson (1838-1935) was the chief instigator of the return to informality in the English garden, albeit in a manner very different from the landscape garden. Continuing in the tradition of the gardenesque, Robinson's focus remained upon the plants themselves, but he rejected the indiscriminate collection of botanical species and the focus upon bright flowers to the exclusion of all else. Instead, Robinson advocated a "wild" garden of hardy plants in which foliage and natural form were as important as color.<sup>119</sup> The hardy plants would be species either exotic or native, but only those that grew well where they were planted. In a gardening world that had been consumed by garish displays of bright flowers that would be torn out as soon as they faded, in a society that had become addicted to its greenhouses for nursing prized specimens of fragile exotics, Robinson's simple proposal to grow hardy plants year-round for foliage, texture, and form as well as color was revolutionary. The revolution was successful, even as the artistic movement of Impressionism took a parallel journey on the other side of the Channel.<sup>120</sup> Robinson's approach to color shared with Impressionism a subtlety, harmony, and delicacy that can be seen in Monet's paintings of his own garden in Giverny, France.

Robinson's colleague Gertrude Jekyll (1843-1932) carried forward the revolution he began, by creating a synthesis of formal and informal, of flower and foliage, of vernacular cottage style and professional landscape design. The garden form central to Jekyll's work and to her shared vision with Robinson is the herbaceous border, which came to supplant the Victorian flower bed in both the practice and the spirit of the garden. A typical Victorian bed might have been a circular plot surrounded by clipped lawn and planted with regularly spaced flowers in an intense display of

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<sup>119</sup> Clifford, *History of Garden Design*.

<sup>120</sup> Fichner-Rathus, *Understanding Art*.

homogeneous color, such as red tulips in the spring, yellow marigolds in the summer, and blue chrysanthemums in the autumn. The bed was a form of sharp edges, big bright colors, and temporary (annual) plants. Jekyll's herbaceous border, on the other hand, would typically be a rectangle bordered by a path on one side and a brick wall or hedge on the other, planted with permanent (perennial) plants of various sizes, shapes, textures, and seasons of bloom. The perennials are planted informally, mixing with one another, spilling over into the path and climbing onto the walls.

Jekyll's herbaceous border combined the formality of a regular underlying structure with the informality of the plantings themselves mixed together in sometimes accidental combinations, as in a cottage garden. The result was a multi-dimensional garden of softened edges and hinted lines, with a sensitive use of color, foliage, and form. In the "cult of the herbaceous border," credited to Jekyll, a new gardenesque balance had been wrought, and the garden had become not just an admirable object of art, but a place for growing numbers of people to practice that art themselves.<sup>121</sup>

The varied and shifting styles of the English garden after Capability Brown demonstrate the significance of Humphrey Repton's break with the rigid patterns of the past. The period from 1790 to 1840 "restored freedom to the garden planner; he [sic] was shackled neither by geometry nor the wavy line nor the need to make his gardens like a picture."<sup>122</sup> This new freedom of the garden met with the overwhelming influx of new plant species, the rise of the middle class, the rage for flowers, an Italianate revival in the midst of international eclecticism, and battles between champions of the garden as either architectural or as wild, to give birth to a twentieth-century English garden that is still thriving worldwide on the threshold of the twenty-first. The new form is a series of open-air garden "rooms" furnished with a rich variety of hardy plants

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<sup>121</sup> Crowe, *Garden Design*.

<sup>122</sup> Clifford, *History of Garden Design*, 178.

gracefully and informally draped over a more regular structure, the “bones” of the garden. An herbaceous border, perhaps in themes of complementary colors, lounges against the walls of a “room,” and an inviting gateway whispers invitations to explore another room beyond. While the art of garden design has continued to grow and change, no new form has yet eclipsed the English garden, still the last great Western style, following in the footsteps of the Spanish-Moorish, Italian Renaissance, and French Classical gardens.

### **American Gardens**

Just as Europeans have adopted and adapted garden styles from each other, American gardens have been based on European styles throughout much of its history. Gardens do not have to be entirely original to be good, however, and some of the best known gardens of the United States were built upon European fundamentals during the Country Place era of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Then, beginning the 1930’s, some gardens began to take on distinctively American styles, especially with the advent of the “California School” of garden design. Finally, the late twentieth century has been witness to new styles emerging in the context of social changes from the 1960’s onward. In garden design as in other forms of art, American culture has evolved from a position of dependence upon Old World forms into a more independent status as a creator of new forms that have in turn influenced the arts in the rest of the world.

In the United States before and just after independence in the late eighteenth century, little attention was given to the garden as an art form. Gardens were for the most part small and practical kitchen gardens as Americans focused on surviving in the New World and on building a new society. The more impressive gardens that were exceptions to this rule, such as Jefferson’s Monticello, were usually in the South, built

with the labor of African slaves for a landed class that was the closest American equivalent to the European aristocracy.<sup>123</sup> These were essentially European gardens in colonial form. As American gardening grew in the nineteenth century, styles generally followed European fashions, with a time lag in diffusion. The English gothic revival, for example, of the 1740's and 1750's did not reach the United States until about the 1830's. American gardens most often followed the English styles of landscape, picturesque, Victorian eclectic, and Italianate, with some Spanish and French influences as well, especially in the South and Southwest.

A great boom in American gardening occurred during what is referred to as the "Country Place" era, from the 1880's to the 1920's. During this period, a number of America's great gardens were built on the country estates of rich industrialists and financiers in a variety of European styles, often reflecting Victorian eclecticism in a series of specialized or themed gardens. George Vanderbilt's Biltmore estate in North Carolina, begun in the 1880's, was one of the earliest. Others include Dumbarton Oaks in Washington D.C., Villa Vizcaya in Florida, Longwood in Pennsylvania, Winterthur in Delaware, Hearst Castle in California, and numerous estates along the Hudson River.<sup>124</sup> These gardens were the result of lavish expenditures and were often inspired by the owner's travels in Europe. With increasing taxation and the stock market crash of 1929, however, the creation of these large-scale private gardens came to an end. Many of the gardens of the Country Place era have since become public gardens run by non-profit foundations. The end of the era set the stage for the development of the first truly American gardens, as garden design met the forces of modern art and modern lifestyles.

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<sup>123</sup> Ogden Tanner, *Gardening America: Regional and Historical Influences in the Contemporary Garden* (New York: Viking Penguin, 1990).

<sup>124</sup> Garrett Eckbo, "United States," in *The Oxford Companion to Gardens*.

Beginning in the 1930's the influence of Modernism was felt in garden design, along with the effects of the Depression. Modern design dominated the American garden in the middle third of the twentieth century and was reflected in increasing numbers of small home gardens as post-WWII prosperity saw the boom of the middle class homeowner.<sup>125</sup> Modern style in the garden took a new perspective on the age-old issue of formalism versus informalism. In an attempt to overcome the dualistic view of human against nature, twentieth-century design has rejected the choice to be made between formal and informal, geometric and undulating, axial and irregular, or symmetrical and asymmetrical. In place of these two rigid patterns and their "fixed vocabularies," the modern garden moved toward integration and the embrace of limitless possibilities.<sup>126</sup> The forms of garden design broke down into a "liquid pattern of informal shapes, interpenetrating on different planes," or "free irregular geometric plans which combine rectangular, angular, and curving patterns."<sup>127</sup> Elements forming these free patterns include paving edges, steps, terraces, retaining walls, fences, trellises, walls, and swimming pools, reinforced by plantings.<sup>128</sup> The flexibility of modern design allowed form to follow function, a move parallel to that in architectural design.<sup>129</sup> This functionality is seen in the first significant American garden style, the "outdoor living" garden.

The outdoor living garden came out of the "California School" of garden designer Thomas Church and others, beginning in the 1930's in San Francisco.<sup>130</sup>

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<sup>125</sup> *ibid*; Tanner, *Gardening America*.

<sup>126</sup> Garrett Eckbo, "United States," in *The Oxford Companion to Gardens*.

<sup>127</sup> Crowe, *Garden Design*, 66; *Oxford Companion to Gardens*, s.v. "United States," by Garrett Eckbo.

<sup>128</sup> Garrett Eckbo, *Landscape for Living* (New York: F. W. Dodge Corp., 1950), excerpted in *American Garden Design: An Anthology of Ideas that Shaped Our Landscape*, ed. Diane Kostial McGuire, 155-190 (New York: Macmillan, 1994).

<sup>129</sup> Tanner, *Gardening America*.

<sup>130</sup> Garrett Eckbo, "United States," in *The Oxford Companion to Gardens*; Tanner, *Gardening*

This style of garden became, instead of landscape to stroll through or a work of art to admire, an extension of the urban or suburban house, an outdoor “room” to be lived in. The mild Mediterranean climate of coastal California, along with a regional culture less conservative than in the East, fostered the development of outdoor living space.

The new California garden, which was to spread beyond the state and across the world, centered upon patio, terrace, and play space, following the modern idea that form should follow function.<sup>131</sup> With the flexibility of modern design, the form of the garden followed the needs of the owner, the local climate, and the individuality of the site, often on a lot size under than one-half acre. The common practice of foundation planting, according to which shrubs were planted at the edges of the house along the foundations, was rejected by Church. He moved these plantings out, so that instead of separating the garden from the house, they now joined the two.<sup>132</sup> Whether as an extended entry space in the front, bringing visitors in transition from street to house, or as a place for tricycles and barbecues in the back, the California style garden became a new kind of room for a society that was doing more and more of its living in private outdoor space.

The last part of the twentieth century, beginning in the 1960's, has brought some new influences to bear on the American garden. Social and ideological changes, especially the environmental movement, have shifted some of the priorities of garden design.<sup>133</sup> Interests in ecology, conservation, and the seasonal patterns of nature have brought to the garden increased demand for native plants, water-conserving species, and a reduction of chemical fertilizers, pesticides, and herbicides. Low maintenance

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<sup>131</sup> Garrett Eckbo, “United States,” in *The Oxford Companion to Gardens*.

<sup>132</sup> Tanner, *Gardening America*.

<sup>133</sup> Garrett Eckbo, “United States,” in *The Oxford Companion to Gardens*.

gardens have grown in popularity, bringing about the replacement of lawns with ground cover, paving, and meadow grasses, as well as the use of trees and shrubs that require little care. Another influencing factor continues to be the restriction of space caused by urbanization and population growth, with a concomitant desire for privacy and seclusion. All of these factors, in concert with the breaking of rigid forms, have contributed to the rise of gardens that contain wildflowers, native grasses, drought-tolerant species, and other native or hardy plants, instead of the stereotypical lawn behind a picket fence with flower beds and foundation plantings.

Even as gardens have become more private in the back yards of the middle class, they have also become more public, with common open- and green-spaces.<sup>134</sup> These communal garden spaces may be community vegetable gardens, corporate plazas, shopping centers, or open commons within residential developments. Public parks often include gardens, and large city parks may house botanical gardens. In addition, many of the former estate gardens from the Country Place era have been transferred to foundations that sponsor research and open the gardens to the public. Various kinds of public gardens are thus used for recreational, commercial, or educational space. The twentieth-century garden has, then, diverged into private home gardens and public or semi-public gardens.

### **The Western Garden Across History**

The history of gardens, from early oasis gardens and ancient Greek philosophers' gardens, through Roman villas, medieval cloisters, the Italian Renaissance, neo-classical France, and Romantic England, to Anglo-American Victorian and modern gardens, is like a lengthy theatrical production, with action and dialog from humanity, nature, art, and architecture, set before the changing scenes of philosophy and the physical landscape. Formality and informality have continually

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<sup>134</sup> Tanner, *Gardening America*.



tried to upstage one another, and the role of the human being, looking out at the garden from a hillside villa or strolling through and around it, has been that of participant as much as creator. The audience is invited onto the stage, into the garden scene, and becomes part of its ever-changing drama.

### **Cosmological Poetics: The Garden as Heaven and Earth**

The long historical view of garden forms can suggest many poetic themes. One of these, one of the “makings” of the garden, is the artistic expression of cosmological points of view. While at times gardens have been designed as explicit representations of specific beliefs, as in the paradise gardens of Persia or the “Gardens of Eden” of medieval Europe, in a broader view, more general trends in the art of the garden are indicative of contemporaneous directions of the gaze upon the cosmos. How humankind places itself between heaven and earth is expressed in this cosmic gaze. In other words, the perspective of the figurative “eye” locates the representative “I” in the scheme of things. “I” may look up from a humble earthly position to an exalted heaven, or down upon the lowly earth beneath our feet, for example. The wide sweep of Western thought over the last millennium has produced a series of such cosmological viewpoints, illustrated in the progression of Western garden styles.

This cosmic play opens on a scene of medieval Europe. The image is a small, walled garden, inside a monastery or fortress, with practical plants for the table and the sickbed and a simple fountain or well in the center as a source of water. The walls are high; there is no glimpse of the world beyond them. The eye is confined, cloistered, in this scene, to look inward, or to look upward. The upward gaze is most desirable and most virtuous, directed toward the heavens above where is found the highest reality. The earth is a mere Platonic shadow of the bright light of higher, truer realms. The eye

is not to look outward to the fallen world, but heavenward to the otherworldly. The medieval cosmic gaze is upward from a humble earth to exalted heavens.

Scene two: Moorish Spain. The image is a patio with rushing water, patterned pavement, colorful flowers, and intricate stonework. A feast of cool shade and water offers refuge from the hot, arid world beyond. Unlike the cloistered garden, there are glimpses of the outside, bright and hot, but they do not draw the self outward. Rather, they return the eye, and the soul, gratefully to the pleasant, lush, coolness of the patio garden, turning away again from the world.<sup>135</sup> Just as in the cloistered garden, the eye turns inward, and the mind is set upon paradise, but the vision of heaven is here seen more clearly, in more tangible form. For the oasis garden is paradise on earth, a chance to turn from the hostile world outside to see the heavenly garden before one's very eyes, to sit among fruit trees and the luxury of cool running water. In the Spanish garden, the gaze is still directed toward heaven, but it need not look so far to find paradise.

The third scene is set at a Tuscan villa in the hills near the Florence of the Medici family, in Renaissance Italy. The image is a garden of terraces on the hillside, of classical design and proportion, with a view along a main axis, over the garden wall into the countryside. Even as the Renaissance mind broke out of the cloisters of the medieval monastery and the rigid orthodoxy of the theology of the church, the garden, too, was freed and revived. The Renaissance was an opening in both mind and space. The uncloistered mind created gardens that were no longer entirely confined within high walls to turn the eye away from the world: the gaze from the hillside terraces now looked over the wall at the world beyond. A great shift of the cosmic gaze had taken place; the eye was drawn down from heaven, to look out onto a world that held renewed meaning.

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<sup>135</sup> Clifford, *History of Garden Design*.

The willingness to glance away from heaven, to consider the earth in its own right, a shift from a vertical to a horizontal gaze, had profound ramifications. The possibilities beyond the garden wall were endless, and secularism and worldliness began to supplant piety and otherworldliness. The revival of classical humanism brought with it even a touch of paganism, albeit with a Christian interpretation. Marsilio Ficino, head of the Platonic Academy in Florence, wrote in 1498:<sup>136</sup>

Through the frequent use of plants and things that are alive you can take a great deal from the spirit of the world, and especially if you nourish and strengthen yourself either with living things or with things only recently rooted in mother earth.

The turning of the eye, and of the “I,” from the spirit of a father god in the heavens to the spirit of the world and of mother earth not only had profound implications for philosophy and worldview, but also created a renewed interest in the art of the garden. For the first time in centuries, the Western eye sent its gaze out upon the face of the earth, and found delight in the garden as an expression of that earth, now visible over the garden wall.

Scene four: seventeenth century France, during the reign of Louis XIV, the “Sun King.” The image is from the second story of a chateau, or perhaps the palace at Versailles. The garden is stretched out before the eye, with the intricate patterning of a *parterre de broderie* directly below and an axial view that carries the eye to the horizon and to infinity. This is the garden of the Enlightenment: formal, geometrical, and rational, a garden for the mind. The view of the garden is from above, reflecting the regal throne of the Sun King and the lofty position of the Cartesian mind. Descartes raised the mind to a position of supreme importance and divorced it from the corpus, from the body of the world as well as the human body. The French garden, designed

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<sup>136</sup> Marsilio Ficino, *The Book of Life*, excerpted in *The Education of the Heart*, ed. Thomas Moore, 159 (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1996).

to be seen from above and to stimulate the mind, is demonstrative of the viewpoint of the “thinking thing,” the observing subject over and above the world that is the observed object.

The French garden, then, returned the cosmic gaze to a vertical perspective, after the horizontal focus of the Italian Renaissance garden that looking out into the world. Unlike the medieval gaze upward to heaven from the lowly earth, however, the vertical gaze is now downward, upon a still-lowly earth, from the lofty position of the exalted Enlightenment mind upon its throne. The human mind has replaced heaven as the higher party in the cosmic hierarchy.

Scene five: England, in the grip of eighteenth-century Romanticism. The image is pastoral: a “temple” designed in the Palladian style, beside a lake surrounded by an irregular sweep of lawn and an undulating belt of trees. In reaction to the French style, this English landscape garden has been swept clean of straight lines and clipped hedges, pursuing naturalism under the rule of the wavy line. It is a vision of the Elysian Fields, the paradise of Classical mythology. The garden now reflects an ideal of nature that is meaningful, nostalgic, emotional, and spiritual: an organic whole intertwined with a humanity that is imaginative, artistic, creative, and subjective as well as scientific.<sup>137</sup>

The new, Romantic gaze has returned to the earth, but it is no longer a lowly earth to be scorned for the glories of heaven. The eye that looked down upon the earth from the lofty position of the Enlightenment has now lifted the earth up to that same exalted level. The highest ideals of heaven are no longer overhead, but underfoot in the visions of nature, heaven incarnate. As the French gaze raised the mind to the level of heaven, the English gaze raised up the earth, to join it. This is therefore a new horizontal gaze, and all is heavenly.

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<sup>137</sup> Tarnas, *The Passion of the Western Mind*.

Scene six finds us in a Victorian conservatory in the late nineteenth century, a picture of glass and steel by which humankind has overcome the limitations of heaven and earth. This is the world of modernism: of technology and industry, of Darwin and science, of locomotives and mass production. The inhabitants of the garden, each leaf and each grain of sand, can now be labelled, catalogued, explained, and altered. A plant becomes a specimen, and there is no longer any sense of heaven. The cosmos has come crashing down to earth, so that all is within the grasp of the knowing hand of the naked ape. The cosmic gaze collapses under the weight of a secularism that has grown and fattened since the Renaissance, replaced by the gaze of the telescope and the microscope that open new worlds to our eyes, worlds of which perhaps we are now the gods.

### **Roles**

The garden plays many roles: it can be a source of food, a refuge, a theatrical spectacle, or a collection of plant species, art objects, or other things. It can be a monument, a masterpiece, a sculpture, an utopia , a temple, a gathering place, a painter's canvas, a retreat, a scene, a play, a place to get one's hands dirty in the nurturing of living things, or a living space to share with guests. At times, the garden has been all these things, and more. Its roles are so varied that perhaps it is inappropriate to lump all of these places into the one category, "garden." Yet we do, and so the uses of the term, the variety of ways we apply it, may contribute more to our understanding of the garden than any definition. In the spirit of poetics, the garden takes us on a journey to its extent, not to some core. More than anything else, the garden--a garden--is a place.

## **CHAPTER FOUR GARDEN EMPLACEMENT AND POETICS**

The dissertation field study included over fifty public gardens in the West, Southwest, South, and Northeast of the United States, which vary in size, form, style, and context. They include botanical and zoological gardens, gardens in commercial space or in public parks, gardens that are part of sacred spaces or on the grounds of museums, and gardens on former estates (see Appendix). The gardens are listed in full in the appendix, by type and by geographical region. A descriptive tour of the gardens serves to elucidate the poetics of place descriptively and second to tie in themes of poetics and emplacement. This is not intended to be a complete or systematic description of the gardens, but a mosaic of poetic images, more from some and less from others. Just as the gardens included are not a representative statistical sample of American gardens, the images that form the mosaic are evocative of, not constitutive of, the gardens as individual places. This evocation is essential to poetics, as suggestive harmony above the symphonic depth of all that a garden is. As the collage in chapter two gave voice to the poetic poet, this mosaic gives voice to the poetic garden.

### **Botanical and Zoological Gardens**

Botanic, or botanical, gardens are devoted to the collection, propagation, study, and display of plants, a tradition of botany and horticulture dating to the first modern botanic garden at Pisa in 1543, which was soon followed by a number of other “physic gardens,” or “*hortus medicus*,” throughout Europe.<sup>1</sup> It was not until after 1753, however, that the system of classification developed by Linnaeus, with its two-part Latin names, gradually became standardized. In the nineteenth century, the garden as botanic collection merged with the Victorian penchant for collecting and with the

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<sup>1</sup> F. Nigel Hepper, “Botanic Garden,” in *The Oxford Companion to Gardens*, ed. Patrick Goode and Michael Lancaster (Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 1986).

post-Darwinian growth of the life sciences to strengthen the botanic garden as a type. Botanical collections were typically arranged taxonomically, but this has recently changed, so that geographic, ecological, or artistic bases of organization have come to prevail.<sup>2</sup>

The study gardens categorized as “botanical gardens” (see Appendix) are diverse, including gardens run by universities, by non-profit foundations, and within city parks. While their styles vary considerably, most are collections of gardens, often geographical or ecological in theme. Most have at least part of their collection labelled with Latin and common names. The category is far from definitive, overlapping with some of the other groups, but the gardens included generally have the adjective “botanic” in their names or are called “arboretums,” meaning a collection of trees. All have a strong sense of collection.

#### **Tilden Regional Botanic Garden**

The botanic garden in Tilden Regional Park is a geographically themed garden within a large urban fringe park in the hills of Berkeley, California. Tilden Park is part of the East Bay Regional Park system; it straddles the peaks of the small range of hills forming the eastern edge of the basin of the San Francisco Bay, so that from various points in the park one can see westward to the Bay or eastward toward Mount Diablo and suburban Contra Costa Country. Tilden’s botanic garden, officially named the Regional Parks Botanic Garden, is nestled in a small valley within the park, surrounded by hills and without any views beyond the parklands.

Tilden Botanic Garden is a garden of California—or rather of the many Californias—for it is a regional garden with areas displaying plants and landscapes from all over the state. Both the state and the garden are divided into ten corresponding

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<sup>2</sup> *ibid.*

sections, as indicated on the map available at the little Visitors Center just inside the entrance. The garden is laid out naturalistically, with meandering paths that lead through landscapes representing the ten regions. The signs that label most plants are color-coded by region, so that, for example, all labels in the Redwood Forest section are in red. The ten sections are as follows: (0) Southern California (mostly arid), (1) Valley-Foothill (including the coastal ranges, central basin, and the foothills of the Sierra Nevada range), (2) Santa Lucia (south-central coast), (3) Channel Island (off the southern coast), (4) Franciscan (San Francisco Peninsula), (5) Pacific Rain Forest (far north coast), (6) Sierran (Sierra Nevada Mountains), (7) Redwood (forested north-central coast), (8) Sea Bluff (shore environments, the length of the Pacific coast), and (9) Shasta-Klamath (northeastern). While each section of the Tilden Botanic Garden is different, sometimes strikingly so, the garden as a whole is tied together by two natural features: Wildcat Creek, which bisects the garden running northward, and the rather steep hills which rise from either side of the creek to the west and the east.

This birds-eye view of the garden is what one first encounters by picking up a map upon arrival or by looking out across the garden from the viewpoint at the Visitors Center. From that point, the hillside falls steeply toward the creek, and a path of switchbacks leads down toward it. There are also several other paths leading to different ways through the garden: there is no circumscribed route.

The birds-eye perspective is instigated not only by the a map or the panoramic viewpoint; it is also the “backing up” stance we habitually use to gain jective knowledge. In the interests of poetic knowledge, however, a different perspective is needed. To *enter* the garden, both poetically and physically, we need to shift from the birds-eye view of the garden as object, away from the map and objective descriptions



of the garden, to a view from the ground. I use the first person in order to signal this shift and to emphasize the immersed experience of being-in the garden.

Instead of taking the steep path down to the creek, I turn left to a path that leads west, to the Sierran section of the garden, where the plants and landscaping represent the Sierra Nevada Mountains (figure 4.1). Mystery is one of the poetic qualities of a naturalistic garden, a wondering what one will find around the next bend. This is illustrated in a scene at the edge of the Sierran Meadow. Standing upon the broad green grass, the way leads to a small stairway half-hidden in the trees. The sun shines brightly on the grass beneath my feet and on the gravel path above the steps, while the stairs themselves are shadowed by the branches arching above them, laden in a riot of shades of green. We forget, too easily, that color in a garden need not be floral to be striking, that even the shades of greens can provide endless variation and interest. The leaves of the overhanging trees not only shade the stairs, but they obscure the way beyond, arousing curiosity.

The way leads up a few steps, while the images I find there carry me much higher, to a hillside laced with granite, overseen by scattered conifers, and I know I'm in the mountains now, near the timberline, as the lush green meadow gives way to harder, hardier plants that spring from between salt-and-pepper boulders amidst the gravel of granite scree. Wildflowers scatter: pink, yellow and violet. Where are the backpackers? But I look out across the garden, with a view of all California, and I'm back in the park, along with the people lying on the clipped green lawn in the sun.

I am sitting on the grass in the Sierras, here in Tilden, by the poppies in bloom, and gentle white tree anemones. An artist caresses the lily pond with her water colors, and a small boy tries a new word on his tongue, "lichen," learned from all-knowing daddy. Many people, but no crowd, enjoy the sun on the grass, lounging, wandering the ups and downs of the garden, admiring interesting plants. It's hard for me to sit

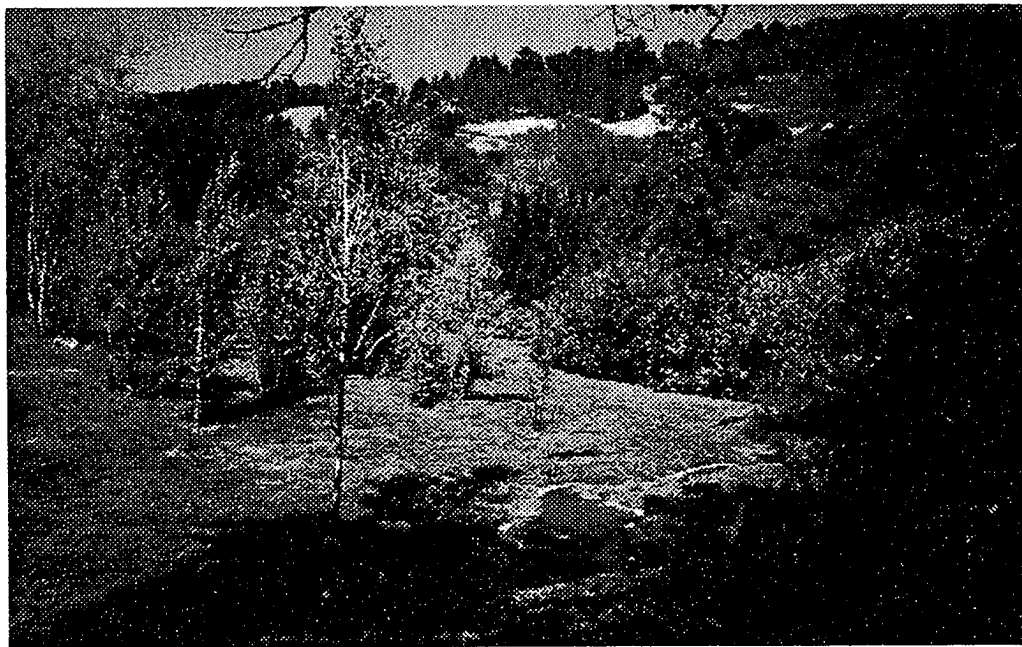


Figure 4.1  
Tilden Regional Botanic Garden  
Berkeley, California  
Sierran Meadow

still here because there is so much to discover just around the corner. This California is running with gold--poppies everywhere--as well as lupine and irises in bloom, punctuating the greens and greens. Quaking aspen plays in the wind. The creek giggles amid gray stones and quilts of dark green moss, framed by walls of stone.

Walking on, the brightness of the sharp Sierran landscape falls behind, and the forest closes in. I find myself in a new region: the Redwood Forest, dim beneath the canopy of the giant trees, as a carpet of fallen brown needles rises softly beneath my feet, and ferns huddle close as if listening for whispers. The space has changed drastically from the Sierran landscape. In one way it is smaller, like walking into a log cabin from the bright open air outside. Here it is darker, closer with trees, and green of roof overhead. In another way, however, it is bigger, as one is dwarfed by trunks that reach up into forever. I am smaller in this landscape, and even sound seems intimidated by the gentle giants as a hush gathers on the forest floor. Indeed it is a floor, even as the Sierran meadow was no floor: to speak of carpets, ceilings, pillars, and posts seems appropriate here. The trees let me wander about their living room, silent sentinels watching over the nooks and crannies of their home as the pathway plays hide and seek behind the tree trunks. Here and there, wooden benches give me a spot my own size to linger for a bit, but ever am I visiting. In a few steps, the magic of the garden has transported me from a meadow of the Sierras to the deepness of the Redwood forest. The same creek babbles by, a little louder here "inside." It is both noisier and quieter here, with the rushing stream invisible and unmistakable. Farther from the street, there are fewer people, more birds, and no sounds of traffic.

Split-rail fences, here among the redwoods but also in the meadow and in the Pacific Rain Forest, evoke their cousins out in the old ranch landscapes of California (figure 4.2). One is emplaced not into an imagined human-less natural California, but

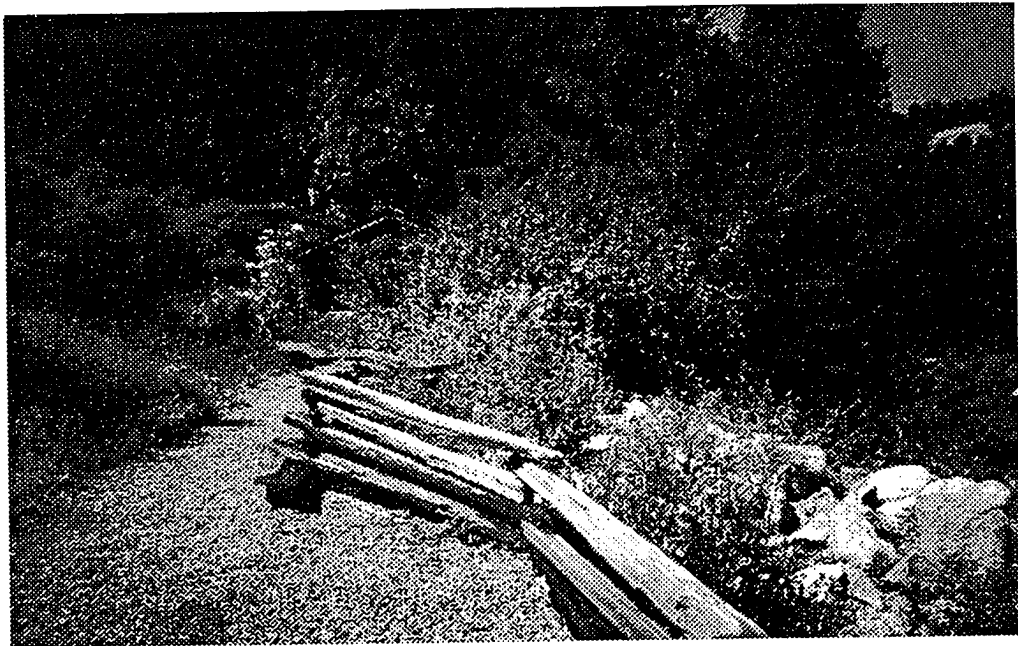


Figure 4.2  
Tilden Regional Botanic Garden  
Berkeley, California  
Split-Rail Fence

out to the landscapes of the California I know, with people in it, and a history. The fences also add line and structure to the naturalistic garden without interrupting the meandering ethic of the place. This ethic is an informal one, beginning at the very gate, that always has choices for the foot, never insisting which way to go. Attention also meanders with the foot, directed toward many little things, apparently random: so different from the big eye-catchers of a more formal garden. The poppies all over the garden also have a sense of scatteredness, adding to the dissipation of the attention. All this makes the emplacement of this garden very relaxed, very easy on the conscious.

As I leave the forest, I grow bigger again like Alice in Wonderland, changing size according to the landscape around me. The Sea Bluff section of the garden clings to the steep hillside by the creek, zig-zagging with many narrow stone pathways (figure 4.3). Accompanied by the sound of gurgling water below, a wide variety of low growing plants native to the shores of California fill the spaces between the small pathways. This is a place to pick one's way through, slowly finding steps down the hillside while taking in the many subtle colors of the plants and reading a few of the botanical labels. This sea-bluff is a little garden, with small spaces and with much charm. The low plants, miniature scale, and steep hillside leave me standing tall, forgetting for the moment the looming power of the redwoods left behind. I pick my way down to the stone bridge, to cross the creek into still another Californian world.

I walk uphill now, past the drought-tolerant shrubs of the central coast and pause at the little sand-dune by the side of the path, held in place by driftwood logs scoured by ocean waves. The dune is covered with delicate flowers of pink and white above long stems with gray-green leaves. The little sign tells me they are Antioch primroses. I smile and head uphill to the Southern California desert. The cactus is a spectacular plant, full of texture and warning. So many of these plants are gray in the



Figure 4.3  
Tilden Regional Botanic Garden  
Berkeley, California  
Sea Bluff  
Picking one's way along the zig-zagging paths

dry desert soil among the reds and browns of the rocks. Here, too, the summer is in bloom, in yellows and lavenders.

### **The UC and Strybing Botanical Gardens**

Two other botanical gardens in the San Francisco Bay Area are of a similar regional-naturalistic style: the University of California ("UC") Botanical Garden in Strawberry Canyon in the Berkeley hills, about a mile from the Tilden garden, and Strybing Arboretum & Botanical Gardens, in Golden Gate Park, a large urban park within the city of San Francisco. The focus for these two gardens is world regional, in contrast to Tilden's Californian regional collection. The UC Botanic Garden covers about thirty-four acres, while Strybing is twice that size. Both are strong in collections from regions with a Mediterranean climate similar to that of coastal California, "hardy" plants for this area, but both gardens have other collections as well. These gardens, like most botanic gardens, are collections of collections rather than one homogeneous whole.

The UC Botanical Garden has the following regional collections: Californian, New World Desert, African, Asian, Australasian, European/Mediterranean, South American, North American, and Mesoamerican. Other special collections include an herb garden, a garden of plants used by humankind, a redwood grove, a garden of old roses, and greenhouses containing ferns and desert, rainforest, and tropical plants. A small admission is charged to visit this garden on the property of the University of California at Berkeley.

Like the Tilden garden, UC Botanical Garden is of naturalistic design with most collections working together to create a landscape evocative of the region represented. A main gravel road loops through the garden, while smaller trails meander through the

collections, sometimes with stairs to negotiate the hilly terrain. The plants are well labelled, the map is well designed and attractive, in color, and there are numerous points from which much of the garden can be seen at a glance; these features make it easy to find one's way through the garden, a luxury that may remain below a level of consciousness. This sense of where one is within the garden as a whole is an aspect of emplacement, relating to the garden as space through which one moves. This habitual quality of relating to place, generally not given conscious attention, can rise into awareness in places where such orientation becomes problematic. In a garden as readily understandable as the UC Botanical Garden, however, the spatial grasp of the place recedes into the background of experience, and one is free to wander or to get "lost" in discovering the ins and outs of the place because there is a fundamental trust in the spatiality of the place, that one will not become truly lost. Lynch calls this quality of place "legibility" or "imageability," a quality vital to our sense of well-being in place.<sup>3</sup> The legibility of a place contributes to its poiesis, as the place "makes" itself into a comprehensible experience of space in place. As a poetic relational-spatial quality, legibility is disclosed phenomenologically by directing attention toward this aspect of emplacement that would otherwise remain beneath the surface of being-in-the-world unless disturbed by the confusion of illegibility.

While this legibility concerns context of being-within the garden, another aspect of emplacement as context concerns the relation of the garden to the landscape beyond it. In the UC Botanical Garden, there is a strong sense of "borrowed landscape," to use a term derived from Japanese gardening.<sup>4</sup> The hills surrounding the garden and the view of the San Francisco Bay through a notch in these hills become part of the landscape of the garden (figure 4.4). Like the historic gardens of Renaissance Tuscany

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<sup>3</sup> Kevin Lynch, *The Image of the City* (Cambridge, Mass. and London: The M.I.T. Press, 1960).

<sup>4</sup> Mara Miller, *The Garden as an Art* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1993).





Figure 4.4  
University of California Botanical Garden  
Berkeley, California  
Sunflowers and "borrowed landscape"

or Romantic England, the enclosure which defines the garden is permeated or overlooked by the eye, in a way that not so much looks *out* of the garden, as brings the landscape beyond *into* the garden. In the case of the UC Botanical Garden, the woodland and chaparral borrowed into the garden fit particularly well with the Mediterranean-climate landscapes within.

The context of Strybing Arboretum & Botanical Gardens is quite different, located within San Francisco's great urban greenspace, Golden Gate Park. At seventy acres, Strybing is twice the size of UC Botanical, and seven times that of Tilden, yet it is swallowed within Golden Gate Park, which comprises over one thousand acres. Although I had been to the park many times before visiting Strybing, as had the friend who accompanied me, neither of us had been to Strybing before, and we did not even know quite where it was within Golden Gate Park. It is visually cut off from the park around it as are many gardens, reflecting their etymological roots as enclosed spaces: the rest of Golden Gate Park cannot be seen from within the gardens, and vice versa. This sets up a strong internality to the garden, with the park as "outside" and the garden as "inside," a relationship reinforced by the limited points of entry, i.e., the two gates that provide access into the gardens.

There is no parking lot at Strybing, so we had to find a space on the congested, winding streets within the park. We emerged from the car with our sweaters and our lunches, hoping that the infamous San Francisco fog would burn off later in the day to take the summer chill out of the air, and we walked back along the road to find the entrance to the gardens. We found it indeed, but upon entering the gardens there was no visitor center, no map, and no indication of which cement path before us would be appropriate to follow. Trees obscured the view in all directions, so that we had no way to take stock of where we were. In sharp contrast to the legibility of the UC Botanical

Garden, the first impression of Strybing gave us nothing to orient upon. This is not a daunting problem--except perhaps to a geographer addicted to maps--so we just wandered off in no particular direction. The confusion continued to mount, however, as we wanted to “see” the gardens, to walk through without missing things or repeatedly returning to where we had already been. However, with no map, few signs, and no viewpoints from which to look out across the garden, our goal was frustrated. We were finding this garden illegible, and although legibility is often subconscious, illegibility can override other aspects of being-in-place. We accordingly changed our goal: we now sought only to find the other gate and hunt down a map. In this we succeeded, finding a little gift shop that had simple line maps of the gardens available, and I also bought a booklet “guide” to the gardens for a dollar.<sup>5</sup> There was also a large map posted near this garden entrance, from which we learned that we had come in through the secondary gate. The orientation problem alleviated, we were now able to enjoy the garden, although I never found it as spatially clear as Tilden or UC Botanical. Illegibility, including difficulty in matching a map to what is before the eye in the landscape, tends to discourage emplacement during navigation within a place, although this will vary depending on the goals and expectations of the visitor.

Although Strybing is as a naturalistic world-regional botanical garden similar to the UC garden, it has some more formal areas near the main gate as well. It is therefore similar in style to the gardens of English garden designer Humphrey Repton, around 1800: more formal and more floral near the house (or, in this case, near the main gate), and naturalistic beyond.<sup>6</sup> Inside the main gate is a rectangular lawn flanked by walkways on each side and a flower bed at each end. A mixed border of flowers and

<sup>5</sup> “A Guide to Strybing Arboretum & Botanical Gardens, Golden Gate Park, San Francisco” (San Francisco: Strybing Arboretum Society, 1990).

<sup>6</sup> See chapter 3.

herbaceous shrubs (in the style of Gertrude Jekyll) runs along the outside of each walkway, up to an arbor that leads into the rest of the garden (figure 4.5). Inside this inner gateway, a small mound edged in stone blocks holds a collection of lichens and similar low-lying rugged plants, hard and rough in contrast to the softness of the flower beds and borders. This close-at-hand, tactile experience competes for attention with the far-to-eye view across the “Great Lawn” to a variety of trees, including a striking Monterey Cypress. This combination of detail close at hand and traditional English “landscape” farther off is again reminiscent of Repton.

The quality of things “close at hand” emplaces us differently--more intimately--than things that are simply “there”: place reaches out to touch me as I do likewise, engaging. This has been a matter of common concern to phenomenologists, this way of being that is engaged with things. Heidegger called it “*Zuhandenheit*,” meaning “readiness-to-hand” or “availability,” in contrast to an understanding of things as occurring objects, “*Vorhandenheit*,” meaning “presence-at-hand,” a common word in German for the existence of things.<sup>7</sup> In the garden, this *Zuhandenheit* may poetically engage not only with the place, but also into a conscious of that contact. When I reach out to feel the texture of a plant, I am intentionally and consciously engaging with plant and garden as engaged; I am poetically expressing Merleau-Ponty’s body-perceiving, as I am “remaking contact with the body and with the world.”<sup>8</sup> This “making” of poiesis is a retrieval of knowing-touching both body and world.

“Bodging forth” into place is exemplified in Strybing’s Fragrance Garden, a place that encourages poetic awareness of *Zuhandenheit*.<sup>9</sup> This small garden is a

<sup>7</sup> Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1962 [1927]); Hubert L. Dreyfus, *Being-in-the-World: A Commentary on Heidegger’s Being and Time, Division I* (Cambridge, Mass., London, England: The MIT Press, 1991); Harold T. Betteridge, ed. *Cassell’s German Dictionary*, rev. ed. (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1978).

<sup>8</sup> Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. Colin Smith (London and New York: Routledge, 1962 [1945]), 206.



Figure 4.5  
Strybing Botanical Gardens  
Golden Gate Park, San Francisco, California  
Mixed Border near the Main Gate

part of the more formal area of Strybing near the Great Lawn and the main entrance. A sign reinforces the sensory character of the garden: “Welcome to the Garden of France. Enjoy the smell, the touch, the sight and the sound of the plants in this garden. They are here for your pleasure.” The sign stands in an herbaceous border edged with driftwood along the walkway. The rest of the fragrance garden, however, is “raised” up from ground level to hand level with retaining walls of stone blocks, bringing the herbaceous plants within easy reach of fingers and noses (figure 4.6). Again, these are mixed borders with great variety of plants, textures, colors, forms, and, of course, fragrances.

Most of the rest of Strybing is made up of naturalistic regional sections from three world climate types: the Mediterranean Climate collections (California, South Africa, southwestern Australia, and Chile), Temperate Climate collections (South America, Asia, eastern Australia, and New Zealand), and Montane Tropic collections (New World Cloud Forest, and Rhododendron collection). There is also a Redwood trail, an Arboretum, a wildfowl pond (where baby raccoons were attracting a lot of attention the day I was there), and collections of succulents and dwarf conifers. Educational signs in addition to the botanical labels explain the ecologies of these climates. In the Californian garden, for example, one sign describes both the natural ecology of “habitats” and the human ecology of “ethnobotany,” with examples of plant use among Native Californians. Another sign, in the New World Cloud Forest, explains the ecology of epiphytes. Such educational materials effect a very different kind of emplacement than the sensory aspects of the Fragrance Garden: an engagement that brings the mind into the garden rather than the hand. Poetic emplacement, as

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<sup>9</sup> David Abram, *The Spell of the Sensuous: Perception and Language in a More-Than-Human World*, (New York: Vintage, 1997).



Figure 4.6  
Strybing Botanical Gardens  
Fragrance Garden  
Raised beds bring the plants to hand- and nose-level

nonjective, does not exclude the mind in favor of the body, but includes both in a holistic immersion into place.

In a similar pattern to the UC garden, there are main paved pathways networking throughout the garden and smaller unpaved trails within each section of the garden. These narrower trails convey a sense of entering “into” the subgardens with changes in texture and in experienced space, and with the presence of vegetation appropriate to the theme of that garden (figure 4.7). In regard to texture, the change of material underfoot is a felt as well as visual experience, moving from paving to sand, stepping stones, turf, or wood chips, for example. There is a change of experienced space in the transition from the broad “avenue” feel of the paved pathways that lead throughout the gardens to narrower byways where plants often overflow into the space of the pathways. The spatial poetics is here, again, evoking insideness and outsideness, despite the “fact” that the garden is all outside. The following are some other poetic “images” from Strybing.

The Zellerbach Garden (named after a patron) is a small crescent-shaped garden that detours from the “avenue” on the way to Asia from Chile. It has flowering plants, such as lavender, and an arbor with benches to sit upon. What holds it as a poetic image in my memory, however, is the fragrance. I think it was the abundant quantity of lavender that aggressively met me with a sickly sweet smell. While the Fragrance Garden, earlier, offered many subtle scents that would meet one halfway, reaching out to them, the Zellerbach Garden did not wait upon the visitors’ initiative, accosting them with its heavy perfumes. The garden is entering into me as much as I am into the garden.

Another image is from a collection of dwarf conifers: the scene is ~~dead-in-your-~~ tracks striking because of color. Most conifers (cone-bearing, evergreen plants with





Figure 4.7  
Strybing Botanical Gardens  
South American Moist Forest  
Stepping stones lead into this subgarden, helping to define its space

needles for leaves) are dark green, although some have a bluish or grayish tint. Some of the dwarf conifers in this collection, however, are a very bright yellow, especially at the tips of the branches. While we might admire some yellow wildflowers while walking past them, the bright yellow color of these trees comes unexpectedly, a poetic pause. This is an explicit illustration of the novelty inherent in a poetic image, which can be found on the ground as well as in words on paper.

Imagine now the Chile garden, forested and thick with every shade of green. The pathway is defined with logs, upon a thick carpet of fallen leaves, winding through the plants of central Chile. Just visible, around a corner, is a hint of orange flowering upon a bush, magnetically drawing one to go see what is around the bend. The body follows the eye deeper into place, a response common to this naturalistic style of garden that usually has something hidden around the next corner.

My last image of Strybing is of stairs in the Asia garden. There are no bright colors here, just cool greens of Japanese Maples and ornamental grasses. A creek makes its way down the hillside, trickling and stepping down over rocks and boulders, level by level. My image is a simple yet mysteriously profound juxtaposition: beside the stepping rocks of the “running” stream, another set of steps, these for human feet. We follow alongside the stream, making our way down the hill even as the water does, a way the brings to mind the philosophy of the Tao Te Ching, according to which we are to flow like the stream.<sup>10</sup>

### **Botanical Gardens of Fort Worth, Dallas, and Oklahoma City**

The three botanical gardens in Texas and Oklahoma included in this study are very different from the geographical-naturalistic gardens in California as described above. All three, the Fort Worth Botanic Garden, the Dallas Arboretum and Botanical

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<sup>10</sup> Lao Tzu, *Tao Te Ching*, ed. Peg Streep, trans. James Legge, illus. Claudia Karabaic Sargeant (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1994).

Garden, and Oklahoma City's Myriad Botanical Gardens are more formal than the California gardens, and they are not as strictly geographical. These three are located in city parks: the two Texas gardens in large urban greenspaces, a similar context to San Francisco's Strybing Arboretum, and Myriad in a smaller park in downtown Oklahoma City. In style and sense of place, they differ from each other and from the California gardens, and each has features that make it uniquely creative.

The Fort Worth Botanic Garden is located on 110 acres near downtown Fort Worth, within the larger Trinity Park. It is a loose collection of gardens within the park, not all adjacent to one another, so that one may drive from some parts of the gardens to others. The gardens are roughly in three clusters, between which are groves of trees, roads, and parking lots. The first cluster is near the main entrance to the park and includes the garden center building with the headquarters and offices, a courtyard garden, a small conservatory of tropical plants, and the Fuller garden. The Fuller garden is a very calm and open garden, with curving flagstone walkways, curvilinear clipped lawns, vine-covered arches, and a view of the downtown skyline. This is a recent, rather formal garden, but it is composed of curves rather than straight lines. There are some understated flowering plants but no bold floral displays. The day I was there, a bride and her photographer were taking wedding pictures in the garden, and the only other people there were two elderly ladies who sat in the shade of a gazebo, chatting.

Most of the rest of Fort Worth Botanic Garden is down the road from the garden center. On one side of the road are the rose gardens, created in 1933 as a Depression-era relief project, as well as a more recent perennial garden. I was there too early in the spring for roses, so the rose gardens were not at their best, but the form of the gardens was apparent, clearly Italian in style. The rose gardens are laid out axially,

with a main axis terracing down the hillside with fountains, a lateral axis , and wooded paths alongside: the perfect form of an Italian Renaissance garden (figure 4.8).

Nearby, but visually separate, is the perennial garden, a more naturalistic garden that contains flowering perennials, fish ponds, herbs, trees, and much stonework. Across the road are several more small gardens: a cactus garden, the “trial garden,” in which new varieties of flowering plants are displayed, and the “four seasons garden,” which was at that time full of flowering bulbs. Finally, there is the 7.5-acre Japanese garden, which I consider the highlight of the Fort Worth garden.

The Japanese garden, built between 1970 and 1976, is a strolling garden in the Japanese style, with extensive use of water, stone, trees, shrubs, and architectural features that combine to form an exquisitely composed naturalistic garden. Great care was taken to create a garden true to the Japanese spirit: it includes some features modelled after those from well-known gardens in Japan, and it also makes good use of the characteristics of the site (its genius locus). I find myself hesitant to attempt a description of this garden, for fear that its poetic logos will not hold up to the distancing created by language. Nevertheless, I will try to speak to some of what this place is, acknowledging that my powers of expression are far inferior to the poetic speaking of the spirit of this place itself.

One enters the garden through a great gate that was designed by a Japanese designer.<sup>11</sup> Then it is time to wander. Running through the garden, or strolling through it, are a series of small lakes—one with a waterfall--and a network of narrow paths that lead beside the lakes, over bridges, beneath Japanese Maple and flowering cherry trees, past stone lanterns and a pagoda, and into a tea house and other small buildings of Japanese style. This is very much a wandering place, with no logical or

<sup>11</sup> This and other factual details are from the map-brochure available at the ticket office.

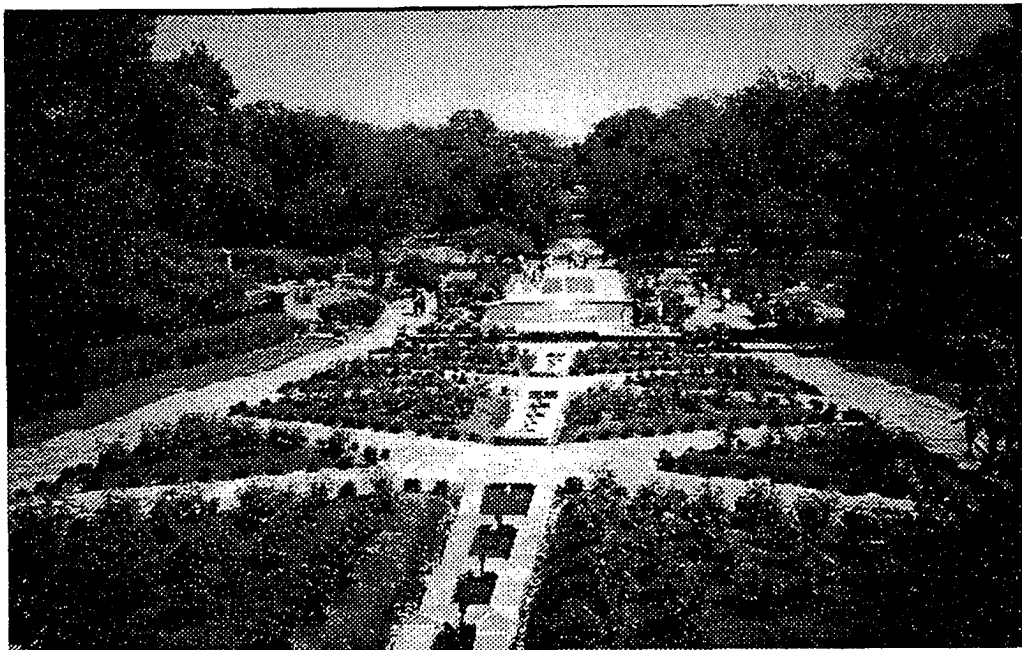


Figure 4.8  
Fort Worth Botanical Garden  
Fort Worth, Texas  
Rose Garden  
Italian Renaissance form

methodical route to follow. It is also a pausing place. One spot meant for a pause is the Zen meditation garden, which follows the design from the Ryoanji temple garden in Kyoto, Japan (figure 4.9). This style of meditation garden is a very simple composition, rectangular as a whole, of raked gravel punctuated with stones, which may represent water and land, respectively. This is viewed from a raised, covered wooden verandah with benches that surrounds the perimeter of the rectangular garden. There are no plants, just the gravel, stones, and the space from which to consider it. The raised verandah acts as a barrier, shutting out the outside world not only from the eye, but from the mind, in a poetic that is both artistic and spiritual.<sup>12</sup>

Wandering back out into the rest of the Japanese garden, it too is a very quiet, tranquil place that stirs the heart to stillness (figure 4.10). This garden, more than any other I have seen, attracts lovers. They linger at the tea house or hide on a bench in the shadows, whispering. “Romantic” is not a sufficient word, however, for the grace of form, subtlety of color, or vitality of the reflections in the water. I retain images of cherry blossoms against delicate greens and greens, of stepping stones over shallow water, of watching people watching the fish, and of little details around every corner.

The Dallas Arboretum and Botanical Garden is as impressive as Fort Worth’s Japanese garden, but for entirely different reasons. As subtle and tranquil as is the Japanese garden, the Dallas garden is bold and playful. While the former attracts lovers and philosophers, this garden attracts people of all ages, including children. The garden is on 66 acres in Dallas’ White Rock Lake Park, on the eastern edge of Dallas. Unlike the Fort Worth gardens, this garden is not scattered through the park; its subgardens are enclosed together in one pedestrian space, with a number of themed gardens, two houses, a concert lawn, and a picnic area. I was in the garden in early April, during their spring festival: the theme that year was “Planet Blooms.” The

<sup>12</sup> Miller, *The Garden as an Art*.

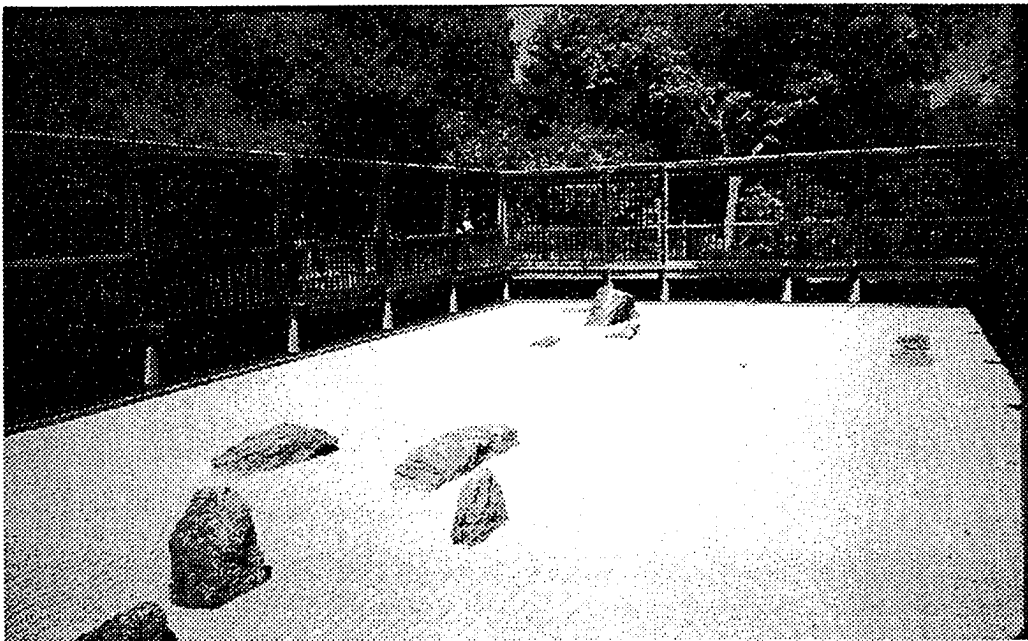


Figure 4.9  
Fort Worth Botanical Garden  
Japanese Garden  
Zen Meditation Garden

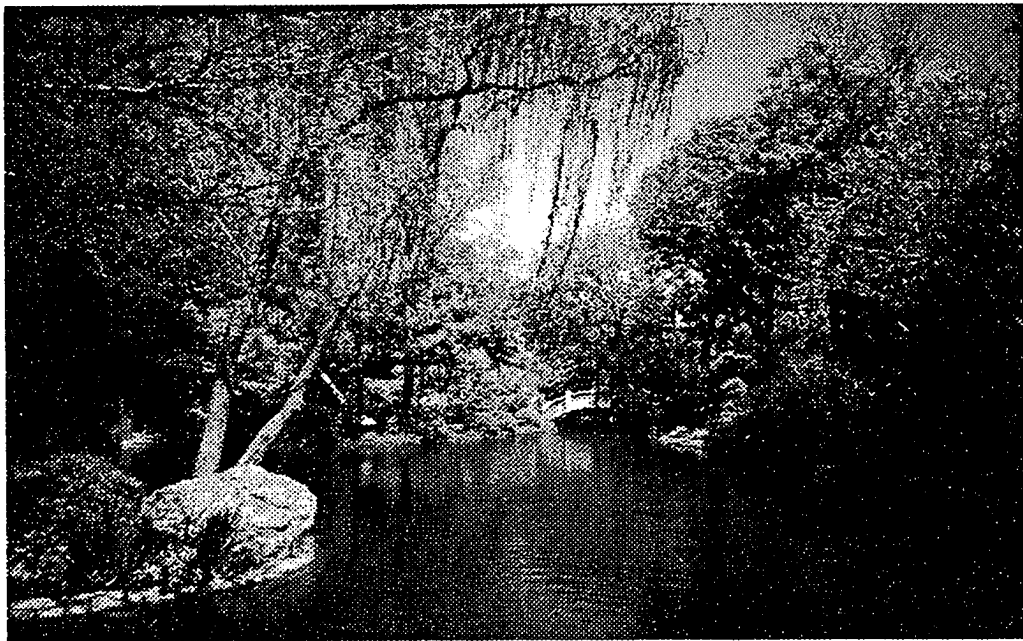


Figure 4.10  
Fort Worth Botanical Garden  
Japanese Garden  
Lake and Moon Bridge



garden is a cooperative public-private venture, and donors are honored, as they are in many such gardens, but in some unique ways. The festival had an astronomical theme with displays that associated plants with planets and stellar constellations, and the text on the back of the garden map described both astronomical and mythological associations.

As I walked into the gardens, the first “Planet Blooms” display couldn’t help but catch my eye. It was a small round bed at the end of the entry walkway, planted with pansies, tulips, and shrubs. In the center of this small bed stood a brightly colored robot, about five feet high (figure 4.11). His sign said “Galileo the Galactic Gardener welcomes you to Planet Blooms,” and another sign indicated the corporate sponsor of this particular display. The idea of a robot in the garden may sound inappropriate, but considering the time-honored role of the garden as a setting for artistic creativity, I found that it worked very well, and the children loved it. The fact that I was there on April Fool’s Day makes the whimsy of the place seem all the more apt. After “Galileo,” there were similar displays along “Astronomers’ Alley,” with more space figures such as a Martian coming out of a flying saucer: “Mercury Marigolds,” “Venus Fly-Trap,” “Mars Mummy” (with chrysanthemums), “Saturn Snapdragon,” “Jupiter Jazzmine,” “Neptune’s Narcissus,” “Uranus Ultraviolets,” and “Pluto’s Petunias.” In addition, unusual varieties of English ivy climbed upon wire and metal sculptures representing ten constellations. “Planet Blooms” created a very whimsical spirit at the Dallas Arboretum and Botanical Garden, a spirit not at all in conflict with the garden underlying it. This Dallas garden is quite varied and creative, with some very bold aspects that appeal to the child of any age and other aspects that speak more quietly and thoughtfully.

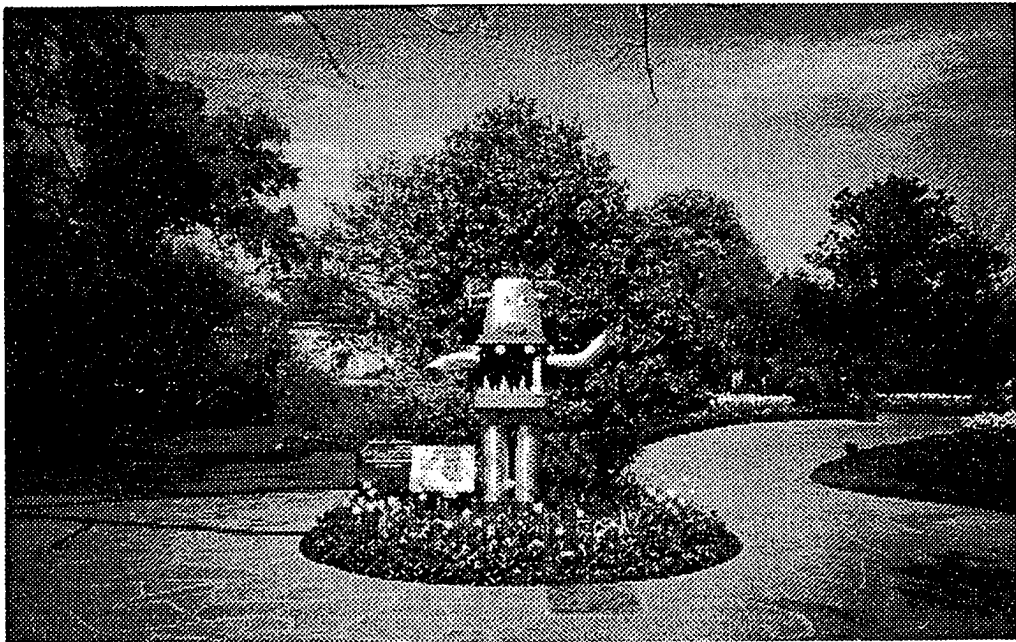


Figure 4.11  
Dallas Botanical Garden  
Dallas, Texas  
“Galileo the Galactic Gardener”

Inside the entrance, one may turn to the right to the Paseo de Flores (“Flower Walk”), where “Planet Blooms” was on display, or to the left into the Jonsson Color Garden and the Fern Dell. Reflecting phenomenologically upon this simple statement of directions in the garden, a deep-seated sense of embodiment is disclosed, for in-place I am oriented or contextualized based on my body. The “wheres” of place extend out from the ground zero of my body.<sup>13</sup> To consider turning left or right is to follow the left hand or the right hand, as my body moves further into place. The garden in which I find myself, the place that I move into, is made concrete to the left-hand, to the right-hand, under foot, ahead (“before the head”), or behind my behind. With movement, my embodied self expands into place, becoming actively engaged with it. Emplacement is therefore embodied, as I not only sense what is around me, but merge the “out-there” of place with the “in-here” of my physical sense. What is ahead of me is an inter-existing of what is me and my head with what is a-head to me. The garden to the left is at my left hand; it is identified with my left hand. So, the left of the place is not experientially distinctive from my left.

In the specific place of the Dallas garden, I do indeed turn left, to the color garden. This garden boasts over 2000 varieties of azaleas, and they are now in spectacularly full bloom (figure 4.12). With a backdrop of trees and edged with tulips, daffodils, and other flowers, the many shades of red, pink, and white azaleas stand out brightly against the large kidney-shaped lawn that acts as their center. This is a very Victorian garden, a bold and intense display of bright colors in abundance. The flowers are so dense that one can see no leaves on the azalea bushes. While Victorian-like beds edge the great lawn, beyond the encircling pathway are more azaleas, now in naturalistic clumps with earthen footpaths and trees overhead.

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<sup>13</sup> Edward S. Casey, “How to Get from Space to Place in a Fairly Short Stretch of Time: Phenomenological Prolegomena,” in Steven Feld and Keith H. Basso, eds., *Senses of Place* (Santa Fe, New Mexico: School of American Research Press).



Figure 4.12  
Dallas Botanical Garden  
The Color Garden: azaleas and tulips

Adjacent to the bold color garden is the Fern Dell, another world entirely. It is densely wooded with trees--cool and shady--winding along both sides of a small stream (figure 4.13). A mist periodically rises within the dell, provided by a hidden spraying system. The effect on the children is enchanting, and I'm sure the ferns appreciate it too. There are a few azaleas in bloom here, too, yet green is the reigning color. Looking out across the dell, the dogwoods are spotted with graceful white flowers, and the Japanese maples add a tinge of red, as the mists rise again.

Turning back now to the way into the other part of the garden, the Paseo de Flores is lined with many colors of tulips, daffodils, and pansies in an undulating border. Leading off to one side, an allée of crape myrtles ends in a plaza called "Toad Corners," another bit of whimsy. The entire square is a ground-level fountain, with a huge frog in each corner shooting a stream of water from its mouth into the center of the plaza, where more water bubbles up from a large stone ball.

The Paseo leads on to the Lay Ornamental Garden, inspired by the garden of English landscape designer Gertrude Jekyll. The architectural features are very contemporary: stone columns and twisted green metal rods resembling vines make up the structure of the entrance gate to the subgarden, and inside there is a unique fountain-like feature called "Water Walls" (figure 4.14). Water falls in sheets through large "windows" within zig-zagging stone walls about twelve feet high, topped by a high arbor of the metal rods with the climbing wisteria in bloom and potted flowers in front. It is a creative, modern, artistic structure in a garden with a whimsical spirit.

Oklahoma City has a small botanical garden, Myriad Botanical Gardens, with a few notable features. This is a very urban garden, in the form of a park that takes up about four square blocks adjacent to downtown Oklahoma City. It is roughly bowl-shaped with an oblong lake in the center, so that one walks down into the park or



Figure 4.13  
Dallas Botanical Garden  
Fern Dell



Figure 4.14  
Dallas Botanical Garden  
“Water Walls”

around the edge. Two features that make this garden particularly interesting are the context and the “Crystal Bridge.” The context is borrowed landscape, similar to the UC garden above, but here, the borrowed landscape is a cityscape: there is no visual barrier between the garden and the city skyline, so that the city becomes part of the garden. This same dynamic may also be seen in San Francisco’s Yerba Buena Garden (see figure 4.30, below), with the cityscape becoming part of the scene of the garden-park. The other notable feature of Myriad is a giant cylindrical bridge that is also a conservatory, the Crystal Bridge. The cylinder lies over the water like a huge log of glass and metal. The upper half is a conservatory, with a tropical rainforest display at one end and a tropical desert at the other, while the underside is working space not open to the public. Myriad thus combines the Victorian tastes for exotic collections and conservatories with late twentieth-century style, in an artistic urban garden that might be called postmodern.

### **Scott Arboretum, Swarthmore College**

Scott Arboretum is a botanical garden scattered across the campus of Swarthmore College, in a suburb of Philadelphia. This is another example of a collection of gardens that is indigenous to the twentieth century and maintains a strong sense of creative artistry. Gardens at Swarthmore include several courtyard gardens outside campus buildings, a traditional rose garden, a holly collection, summer and winter gardens, a teaching garden full of shade and water, a cloister garden that harkens back to medieval monastic gardens, and gardens of rhododendrons, pines, and dawn redwoods. The dawn redwood is a variety once believed extinct but now propagated from a sole remaining stand found in an isolated Asian monastery. Another garden at Swarthmore is called the “Biostream,” a construction designed both for artistic interest and for practical function (figure 4.15). The text on the map/guide describes it: “A





Figure 4.15  
Scott Arboretum  
Swarthmore College, Pennsylvania  
Biostream

naturalistic planting of flowering shrubs and perennials surrounds a rock-filled drainage bed allowing storm water to be handled in a creative and responsible manner.” The rocks in the drainage bed are somewhat reminiscent of cobblestone walkway. There is a poetic here of ecological responsibility and of human creativity in response to that call.

Three of the courtyard gardens of Scott Arboretum deserve mention: the Nason garden, the Wood Courtyard, and the Cosby Courtyard. The Nason garden is a study in textures, using plants and also building materials (figure 4.16). I was fascinated by the paving materials: gray flagstones edge the walkways, in contrast with the sharp black color in the center of the walkways. A closer examination reveal this as blacktop, which I never would have expected to be anything but ugly. In this courtyard garden, however, it has a striking visual effect.

Another courtyard, the Wood Courtyard at one of the science buildings, is notable for its weak poetics. When I found it, I barely glanced at it before leaving, because it is so unremarkable. I then checked myself, phenomenologically, and returned to the courtyard to find out why it had given me no reason to stop and look at it. I concluded that the problem was mostly a matter of attention. One of the poetic elements that draws us into emplacement is the presence of one or more visual or sensual foci. The Wood Courtyard lacks any appealing focus: the foliage has very little contrast in color or texture and no interesting forms to capture the attention. Further, it is framed on three sides by an unattractive institutional building, while the fourth side, the threshold to the courtyard, makes no statement and has no magic. Here is a place that is dis-placing rather than emplacing: it told me to walk on by. Perhaps it is a spiritless place.

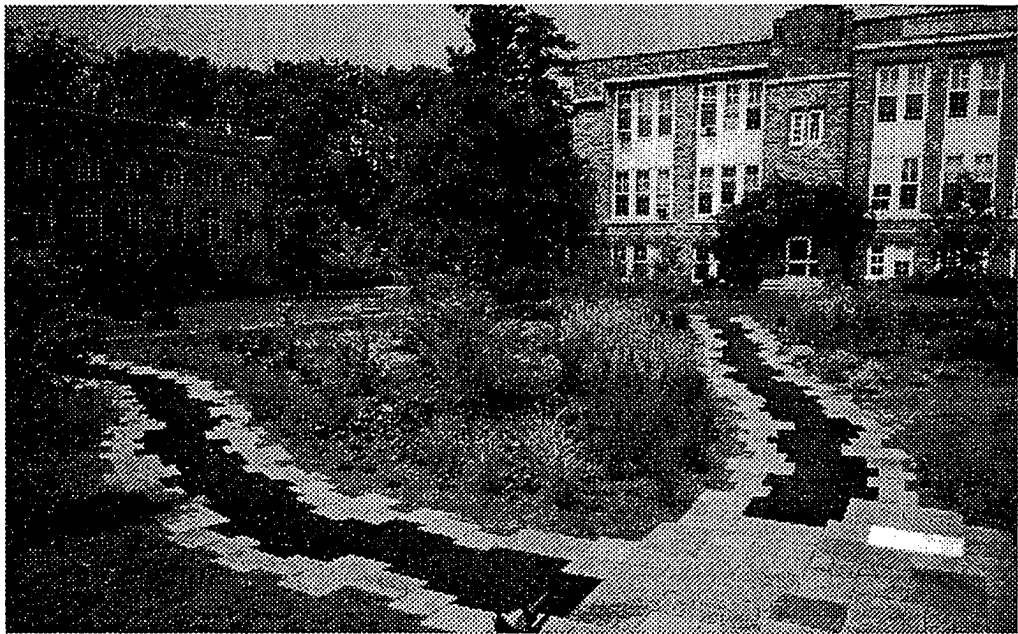


Figure 4.16  
Scott Arboretum  
Swarthmore College, Pennsylvania  
Nason Courtyard Garden  
Flagstone and blacktop

The Cosby Courtyard, nearby, is everything that the Wood Courtyard is not. Standing by the Wood Courtyard, I could see across the small quadrangle and through the glass-enclosed first floor of a building into a courtyard that was intriguing even from a distance. When I reached it, this courtyard garden more than lived up to its promise (figure 4.17). It is a very dramatic, postmodern, rich, complex garden that relates well to the building surrounding it. Shapes and structures in the garden echo the building, a some of the same stone is used in both. The plants within the courtyard are in beds, borders, and pots, following a theme of purple and gold foliage in addition to other colors. The lines of the garden bring the eye to a number of different levels in both vegetative and architectural elements, with both vertical and horizontal movement. Along with this sense of movement found in vertical pillars of wood and stone and in horizontal surfaces in walkways and low walls, there is also a sense of rest, as there are many points of focus upon which the eyes may rest and benches to respite the entire body. Some of the perennial beds are edged in metamorphic rock that sparkles in the sun and adds additional interest. This is an intriguing garden; with its complexity and contemporary design, it has the strength of spirit lacking in its neighbor.

### **The World at Your Doorstep**

Botanical and zoological gardens (“zoo” is short for “zoological garden”) are places that bring the world to your doorstep and place you inside or before it. They are participations in, or confrontations with, the variety of life on earth or of species across the globe. This can create a sense of spectacle, education, scientific expertise, geographic and climatological regionality, fervor for collecting, fascination with the unfamiliar, or the range of aesthetic experiences to be found in relation to forms of life on earth. In some cases they are naturalistic, like the three California gardens

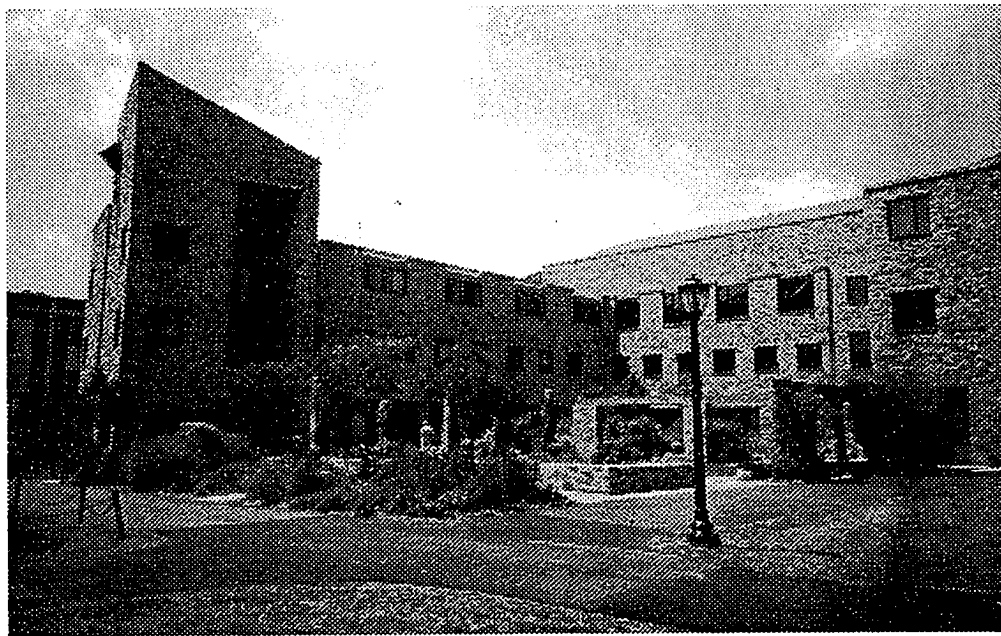


Figure 4.17  
Scott Arboretum  
Swarthmore College, Pennsylvania  
Cosby Courtyard  
a rich, complex courtyard garden

described, or they may be more formal, like parts of the Fort Worth and Dallas gardens or the Art-Deco-influenced New Orleans Botanic Garden.

The most naturalistic of the botanical gardens I visited was the Henry Foundation for Botanical Research, in Gladwyne, Pennsylvania, in greater Philadelphia. Mrs. Henry told me: "We don't have a show garden. We try to keep the plants happy." There were no paths or stairs for human visitors: I had to climb up a hillside to reach the rock garden, which was wonderfully wild while also cultivated. The butterflies and the bees love the place, and they were there entirely by choice, unlike some other enclosed butterfly gardens, as at the Hershey Gardens or the Audubon Zoo. In this garden, I was the only person in sight and felt that I had entered Flora's realm. The big boulders invited a child-like climb, but it also seemed like one shouldn't invade, so I left the butterflies to themselves. The only sounds were the cicadas and bees.

There is more resemblance between botanical and zoological gardens than one might initially think. In addition to the fact that many zoos also have flower beds, groves of trees, and works of art like botanical gardens, they are collections of pieces of nature arranged with an eye to more than practical issues, and they are similarly visited places. There are also differences, besides the obvious of collecting animals rather than plants.

With some exceptions, the botanical gardens in the study are more often directed toward adults rather than children, while zoos are often seen as a place to take the children to. It is interesting to observe children as emplaced in a garden, whether a zoological garden or a family-friendly botanical garden like at Dallas. Children appear less likely to take the objective step backwards; they are engaged actively and physically, with their imaginations and sense of wonder. The petting zoo illustrates

this, as does one tree I saw in the San Francisco Zoo, swarming with children climbing in it. Another child yelled to his father, “I love the climbing tree,” as he ran to join in. Children seem more willing to bodily and sensually engage with things and places around them; they are often told “do not touch,” whereas we adults more frequently take on an objective distance without being told. Perhaps one reason I appreciated the Dallas Botanical Garden so much is that in embracing children it also gains a sense of freedom to experience, and to be emplaced.

Zoological gardens also exhibit the range of formality and informality found in other gardens. The trend in the bigger zoos has been away from the old cages and toward naturalistic-appearing displays. The Dallas Zoo is divided into two big sections, “ZooNorth” and the “Wilds of Africa.” About half of the African section of the zoo has no pedestrian traffic and can be seen only by a monorail that travels its perimeter. A sign declares this “the first zoo exhibit in the world to include every major habitat of an entire continent—Welcome to the zoo of the future.” This exhibit goes a step beyond the small enclosures decorated to look like natural habitats to larger naturalistic landscaped regions each labelled: Bush, Desert, Woodlands, Mountains, Rivers, and Forest. The Audubon Zoo, in New Orleans, also has a mix of formal and informal styles in both the zoological exhibits and in the gardening of the grounds. In the variety of styles, exhibiting different creative and poetic spirits, the collections of botanical and zoological gardens as visited places bring the world to your doorstep.

### **Gardens in Commercial Spaces**

Commercial spaces provide a very different context for some of the gardens in the study: shopping centers or other commercial developments. In order to learn of notable gardens open to the public that I might include in the dissertation fieldwork, I consulted not only books and tourist guides, but also the world wide web on the

internet. One web site, called “The Bay Area Gardener” listed and described numerous visitable gardens in the greater San Francisco Bay Area, including some in places I would not otherwise have considered.<sup>14</sup> These included the Stanford Shopping Center and the Allied Arts Guild, both near Stanford University, and the Barnyard Shopping Center in the town of Carmel on the central California coast. Visiting these unexpected gardens gave me some pleasant surprises. Some other gardens in commercial spaces that I have included in the study are the Tlaquepaque Center in Sedona, Arizona; Penn’s Landing, a waterfront development in Philadelphia; and Hershey Farm, an Inn in Pennsylvania’s Lancaster County. In some cases these were gardens that found me rather than places I intentionally sought. All of them are gardens in order to be pleasant places rather than in order to be gardens.

There is a marked contrast in garden style between the Barnyard in Carmel and the Tlaquepaque Center in Sedona. Although both are commercial centers with shops, restaurants, and art galleries and both have gardens structured in a series of courtyards, these courtyards are very different. The Barnyard is influenced by English and Californian styles, its wood buildings surrounding numerous mixed borders of flowering plants that spill over in profusion onto the red brick paving (figure 4.18). While the influence of Gertrude Jekyll is apparent in the mixing of colors, shapes, and textures creating an informality within the structure of the courtyard setting, the multilevel design, use of redwood in the buildings, and California poppies are some of the elements that place the garden in late twentieth-century California. The multilevel design of the courtyards, with steps leading upward, downward, and around corners to other courtyards and other perspectives, provides a strong sense of movement in this garden.

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<sup>14</sup> Carol Moholt, ed., “The Bay Area Gardener” World Wide Web site: <http://www.gardens.com/> (Menlo Park, Calif.)





Figure 4.18  
"The Barnyard" Shopping Center  
Carmel, California

The Tlaquepaque Center in Sedona, Arizona, takes the courtyard concept in a very different direction, drawing from Spanish and Moorish influences (figure 4.19). With Mediterranean styles of architecture and plantings, tiled fountains in the centers of regular courtyards, and patterns of red flowers and blue tile, the gardens of Tlaquepaque evoke not the English garden but the Spanish patio garden. In Bachelard's terms, the poetic images of Tlaquepaque "reverberate" into the Mediterranean past, with stucco architecture, potted cactus, and near-white paving that echo into desert landscapes. The contrasting bright flowers and cool fountains echo into the garden as oasis. The Allied Arts Guild, a collection of arts and crafts workshops and retail shops that benefits the nearby childrens' hospital at Stanford University, is also Spanish in style, with Spanish colonial architecture and courtyards reminiscent of the gardens of Grenada in Spain (figure 4.20).

These gardens that reverberate into Moorish Spain have an added poetic novelty in the American context because the Spanish forms are less common and less familiar here than are the English forms. This makes these gardens seem more "themed" than gardens like those at the Barnyard based on styles more often encountered. While from a critical point of view such theming may be seen as staged or inauthentic, from a poetic perspective it may accomplish Coleridge's "charm of novelty" that lifts the "film of familiarity."<sup>15</sup> More generally, gardens that carry less familiar styles, such as Japanese or Spanish, or gardens that display extraordinary creativity (poiesis), such as the whimsy of the Dallas Botanical Garden or the rich complexity of the Cosby Courtyard garden at Swarthmore College, call more strongly for the poetic pause.

The surprise of finding an unexpected garden can also contribute to the poetic pause and therefore to the awareness of emplacement. Stanford Shopping Center is the

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<sup>15</sup> Samuel T. Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria*, excerpted in *Poets on Poetry*, ed. Charles Norman, 160.



Figure 4.19  
Tlaquepaque Center  
Sedona, Arizona  
Spanish-style patio garden

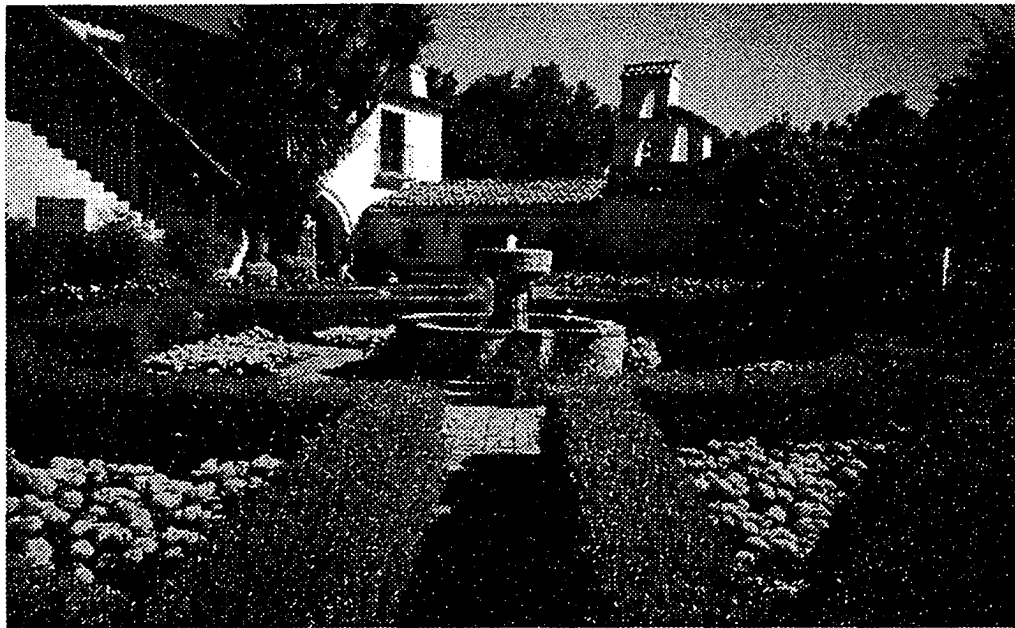


Figure 4.20  
Allied Arts Guild  
Menlo Park, California  
Another Spanish-style garden

sort of place we might expect to see little attention to overall aesthetics: we are accustomed to the barren gray concrete of parking lots and the plain sand-colored walls of department stores. At the Stanford Shopping Center, however, the sense of place is much fuller, with gardens integrated into the retail space. This is an excellent example of container gardening, with potted plants large and small, from trees to flowers, as well as fountains, grass, and plenty of places to sit. This is a strongly peopled garden, and many use the place: they may be sitting in the sun or in the shade, drinking coffee, watching the children play in the fountains, eating lunch, playing with their dogs, or waiting for a spouse who has gotten lost in the shopping experience (figure 4.21). One of the walls in the Stanford center holds a creative mural of a European street scene, with doors, windows, and flowers in window boxes (figure 4.22). What makes it a particularly creative piece of art is the progression along the wall to increasing three-dimensionality. At the far left of the mural, the images are almost all painted on, but moving to the right, as one walks down the passageway between two stores, more and more three dimensional elements are added to the mural: real lampposts, door handles, or window boxes. Another creative element in this garden is the variety of fountains in many styles, including one very modern-artistic fountain that almost disappears into the wall and another featuring frog-mermaids lounging on a rock. All of these elements add novelty and surprise to the underlying foundation of pleasant functionality in what could have been mere spaces between retail buildings.

Other gardens in commercial space included in the study are Penn's Landing, a waterfront development in Philadelphia that has a much better sense of cared-for gardens than does most of adjacent Independence Park, and Hershey Farm, an inn in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania ("Amish Country"), which conveys a very Victorian



Figure 4.21  
Stanford Shopping Center  
Palo Alto, California  
A well-used garden  
(At center, a couple walks their dog)



Figure 4.22  
Stanford Shopping Center  
Mural with increasing three-dimensionality  
progressing to the right

sensibility with beds of intense bright colors, each homogeneous with one type of flower. Both of these gardens found me where I was not expecting them.

### **Gardens in Public Parks**

Study gardens within public parks include not only botanical gardens, as described above in San Francisco, Dallas, and Fort Worth, but also gardens of various other types and styles in large urban parks, smaller city parks and plazas, and one urban national park. In these contexts we find flower gardens, conservatories, themed historical and regional gardens, and rose gardens, among other styles of public gardens. These study gardens within parks are located in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania and in three California cities: San Jose, San Francisco, and Oakland.

Philadelphia is arguably “the preeminent horticultural center of this nation,” and in this spirit it contains not only prominent private and non-profit gardens, but also gardens within public parks. The city’s Fairmount Park is a great urban park three times the size of New York City’s Central Park, and Independence Park is a National Historic Park in the heart of old downtown.<sup>16</sup> Independence Park contains the Liberty Bell, Independence Hall, and numerous other colonial buildings and sites, but also several squares and a few gardens. I was largely disappointed in the gardens of Independence park when I was there, however, as they tended to suffer from neglect or from construction activity. Several of the main squares in the park were under construction, and where I expected to find Dolly Madison’s kitchen garden was another construction zone. The rose and magnolia gardens were both intact, but they were neglected, abandoned, and unpeopled, even on a day when the rest of Independence Park was quite crowded. This is another example of the poetic voice of a place repelling rather than attracting people. I did find a couple of inviting gardens in the

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<sup>16</sup> William Klein, Jr., *Gardens of Philadelphia and the Delaware Valley* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1995).



park, however: at the Liberty Bell Pavilion and at the site of the remains of Benjamin Franklin's house. The Liberty Bell is housed in a small building with one wall completely in glass facing Independence Hall, so that visitors inside the pavilion looking at the Bell see the small flower garden just outside the glass and the famous building beyond. Franklin Court, once the site of Franklin's house, is a creative modern plaza designed by architect Robert Venturi (figure 4.23). At street level are a plaza with plantings around the edges, a white frame structure suggestive of a house, and half-arches of cement that shelter windows looking down at the remnants of the Franklin house foundation, below. Underneath the court is a small museum.

Fairmount Park, along Philadelphia's Schuylkill River, holds a horticultural center on the site of the 1876 Centennial Exhibition and a seventeenth-century style Japanese house and garden, and well as a zoological garden, museums, and historic estates. The horticultural center has greenhouses, a formal axial garden, and display gardens. Entering through the small office, a door lead into one end of the first greenhouse partitioned by a tall, feathery hedge, creating a sort of entry hall. One is greeted by long palm fronds leaning down from each side and, directly ahead, a little pool with a bamboo plant in the center. Beyond is a statue in tarnished green metal of a little boy draped with seaweed and standing on the back of a giant sea turtle, surrounded by flowering pink begonias. This is a strong entry piece, focal and arresting, immediately bringing one into poetic space that contrasts with the prosaic space of the office one has just left. The statue and the bamboo are easy focal points, while a variety of textures adds depth. There is a feathery texture in the hedge, the bamboo, and in ferns that rim the outside of the statue's base. This featheriness is contrasted by the sharpness of the palm fronds and the aged hardness of the statue. Under foot is the bumpiness of conglomerate rock paving interrupted by radiating veins of larger cobblestone, repeated within the little pool by more cobblestones, softened

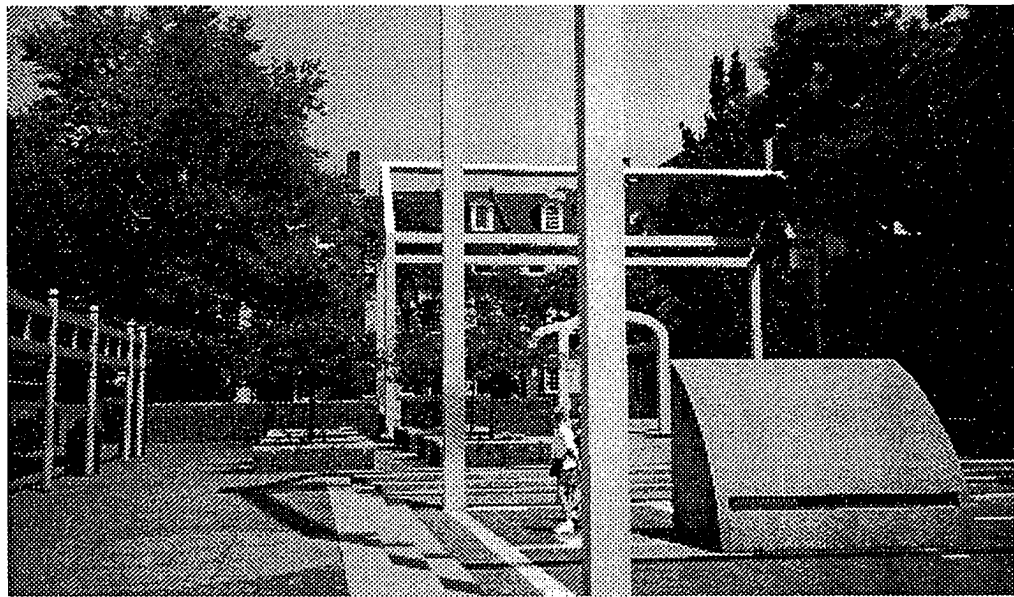


Figure 4.23  
Independence National Historic Park  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania  
Franklin Court  
White frame structure by Robert Venturi  
is suggestive of Benjamin Franklin's House

under the water. The multi-colored cobbles trick one's eyes, shifting beneath the water as one changes angles. The begonias act as a textural intermediary, with their harder leaves and softer flowers.

Moving beyond the entryway, there is a large, open, middle section to the greenhouse, planted with tropicals around the edge and in baskets hanging from the high pitched translucent greenhouse ceiling. The large open space in the center would be stark if not for the pleasant texture of the conglomerate and cobbled paving. At the other end of the greenhouse is another smaller "room," sectioned off by an attractive low brick wall and the tropical plants around it, with a view through the door to the axial garden outside. Entering this little room, a fountain tucked into the corner on the left catches the attention. It is a traditional, formal fountain, in white marble with three small boys of mythic appearance sitting on a rock, up from which springs a "tree" of marble leaves that spreads out to form the upper basin of the fountain. Water dribbles down to a circular pool at the boys' feet, the cobbles in the bottom matching those from the floor and from the pool by the entry. The low stone wall encircling the pool is topped with white marble, echoing the other marble and offering a place to sit and look at the fountain. More potted and bedded plants form a backdrop. This is very pleasant conservatory, spacious, green, and filled with the sound of dripping water. There is also, however, the sound of squeaky fans competing with the sounds of the fountain, a displacement alongside emplacement.

Instead of taking the door to the outside, I take a side door into the other greenhouse. This one is three times the width of the first greenhouse, but with lower ceilings. The near half of this larger greenhouse has three beds: two smaller raised beds with red brick walls to the left, one of which has desert plants, and a larger tropical bed to the right. This tropical bed has a short brick walkway that winds

through it and a statue of a woman on a dolphin's back. Her upraised hand almost touches the low ceiling, as do some of the taller plants, so that the greenhouse has a cramped feeling. There are several places to sit, including one bench that faces a wall consisting entirely of the ugly coils of the air-conditioning unit. The farther half of this larger greenhouse is very sparse, with some plants hanging and along the edges, but the cement floor is mostly clear. The space has a strong social feel, with space for lots of people and echoes of parties that must take place here. This larger greenhouse is not nearly as inviting as the first, smaller one: it has the lower ceiling, fewer textural details, and a plethora of wires, beams, pipes, and other technological clutter overhead. It doesn't ask me to linger.

The outside gardens of Fairmount park's horticultural center contain the axial garden and display gardens. The axial garden begins with a long rectangular pool, misnamed the "Reflecting Pool": between the wind and the plain water jets within it, there is no chance for reflection. The walkway around the pool is gray cement, like a road. Signs read, "Danger: Water Chemically Treated." The logos of this place repels as much as it attracts. Beyond the pool, along the axis, is a sundial set in a circle of trees, flanked by clusters of flowering shrubs, and then a butterfly garden. Off to each side, in the trees, are statues of Goethe and Schiller with inscriptions in German indicating that they were dedicated in the late nineteenth century by German-American Philadelphians. The sundial is in a sunken patio with an eight-pointed directional star inscribed in the patterned with brick and concrete. It is a pleasant place to sit, in the shade, with flowers out in the sun beyond, in four directions: cool white and blues north and south along the axis, and warm yellows, purples, and reds to the east and west, drawing the eye off the axis. The formal directionality fits the tone of the formal pool, with fewer displacements. There is one oddity here, however. The sundial

garden has shade trees to the north and south, putting the sundial itself out of place, unable to function when it is in the shade. The butterfly garden is also somewhat out of place, since it is in the style of an informal cottage garden. While attractive and colorful, its informality clashes with its place in the formal structure of the axial garden.

The nearby Japanese house and garden is called Shofuso, “The Pine Breeze Villa” (figure 4.24). It is in a seventeenth-century upper-class Japanese style, with the house set up a museum-like display.<sup>17</sup> A pond takes up much of the garden, which also has stepping stones, a small stone pagoda donated by the city of Kyoto, traditional plants of Japan, a life-size statue of the Buddhist children’s deity Jizo, and many rocks imported from Japan. While many of the gardens in my study are associated with houses or other buildings, the garden can usually be considered separately. In Japanese gardens, and at Shofuso in particular, this is not possible, as the house and garden create one seamless whole. A different, Eastern, conception of nature and culture bring the two into an intimate involvement that collapses the distinction in a particularly explicit way. Upon entering Pine Breeze Villa, visitors are required to remove their shoes to protect the floors and the tatami mats, and to follow Asian custom. This is a transitional activity than signals the shift into the poetic space of the villa. Paper slippers are provided for those not wearing socks. The removal of shoes, and for some the addition of paper slippers, adds a powerful sensuality under foot, as we become delicately aware of our footsteps and the different textures of wood or tatami beneath them. There were smooth wood floors, floors with small gaps between the boards, creating a ridged feel, and the unusual texture of the tatami. The sounds of paper slippers shuffling along on the floor delights children, transports adults to a

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<sup>17</sup> Timothy R. Tomlinson and Barbara Kłaczynska, eds., *Paradise Presented: Beautiful Gardens in Philadelphia and the Delaware Valley* (Philadelphia: Morris Arboretum of the University of Pennsylvania, 1996).



Figure 4.24  
Fairmount Park  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania  
Pine Breeze Villa

different world, and mingles with the sound of falling water to construct a unique soundscape.

The self-guided tour moves people through the villa to see the rooms of the main house, the bath house, and the kitchen as well as the garden. Many people stopped to sit on the veranda and simply watch the garden and the pond, in some cases for a substantial amount of time. The poetic pause here brings observable physical pause. Then, walking through the garden, stepping on the stepping stones (the feet again within shoes), the need to watch one's step impresses an awareness of the foot in a similar manner to going without shoes, but with a different quality of experience.

The Japanese garden has become a popular style in the United States in the twentieth century. Other examples can be found in Hershey Gardens (a rather poor example), in San Francisco's Golden Gate Park, and in Oakland's Lakeside Park, in addition the large one in Fort Worth described above. Other Asian-style gardens are less common, however, which makes the Overfelt Gardens, in San Jose, California, remarkable. On the former site of the Overfelt Ranch, this public park has a small fragrance garden, a Palm Grove, a native plant and wildlife sanctuary called "California Wild," and a "Chinese Cultural Garden." The Chinese garden was created in association with San Jose's sister city, Tainan, on the island of Taiwan (Republic of China). Elements donated by the citizens of Tainan and designed by Wang Yu Tang include the Friendship Gate, the Sun Yat Sen Memorial Hall (figure 4.25), the Chiang Kai-Shek Pavilion, a thirty-foot statue of Confucius, and the Plum Pavilion.<sup>18</sup> There is also a Black Stone from the mountains of Taiwan that was presented by the mayor of Tainan, with an inscription in Chinese and English. Although this is called a Chinese "cultural" garden, it is more a political garden, with no mention of the communist

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<sup>18</sup> William C. Mulligan, *The Complete Guide to North American Gardens*, vol. 2, *The West Coast* (Boston, Toronto, London: Little, Brown and Co., for Running Heads Inc., 1991).



Figure 4.25  
Overfelt Gardens  
San Jose, California  
Sun Yat Sen Memorial Hall  
in the Chinese Cultural Garden



People's Republic of China on the mainland and with memorials to major Nationalist Party figures. This is not made apparent in the landscape of the garden itself, however. Even the Plum Pavilion, apparently more neutral, hides strong political content: the plum is the state flower of the nationalist Republic of China, but not of the island of Taiwan itself, where the climate is inhospitable to the plum.<sup>19</sup> A poetic pause occurring in the experience of Overfelt Gardens may or may not lead to such political considerations, depending on the frame of reference available to an individual. Another, less political, Chinese garden may be found at Jungle Gardens, on Avery Island, Louisiana, on the former McIlhenny estate of Tabasco fame.

Also in San Jose, California, are two public rose gardens with strongly contrasting poetics. First, the Heritage Rose Garden at Guadalupe Gardens is a new garden built in 1995, one of the first phases in the planned construction of a collection of gardens along the Guadalupe River between the airport and downtown San Jose. With three thousand varieties of antique roses, an organic horticultural ethic, and a state-of-the-art irrigation and mulching system, it is to be the largest such collection in the world.<sup>20</sup> While it sounds very impressive on paper, the poetics of place I found there on a summer day in 1997 have an altogether story to tell.

Guadalupe Gardens is located in an industrial area of San Jose, which means that the surroundings are rather unattractive. Because of this, the garden's lack of enclosure is to its detriment: the open sight-line beyond the garden makes industrial buildings and bypassing busses an unwelcome part of the garden's landscape. It is also located under the flight path of jets taking off from the nearby airport, a frequent and persistent intrusion of noise. Turning the attention inward, the rose garden shows signs of neglect that mirror its industrial surroundings (figure 4.26). There are indeed

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<sup>19</sup> From personal conversation with Dr. Yi-Fong Chen, a Taiwanese geographer.

<sup>20</sup> Moholt, ed., "The Bay Area Gardener" (<http://www.gardens.com/>).

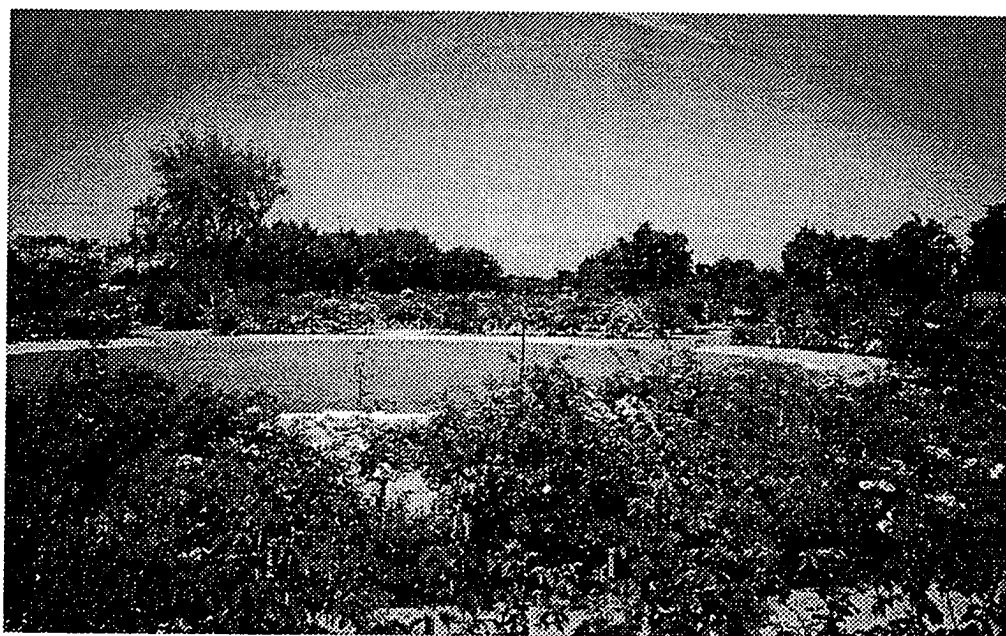


Figure 4.26  
Guadalupe Gardens  
San Jose, California  
Heritage Rose Garden  
Overgrown rose bushes and central pavement

an abundant number of roses, arranged in concentric circles, but they look untended, with the wilted flowers left on the bushes and some plants badly overgrown. Perhaps the state-of-the-art system left out the human element, and the hand of the gardener is now sorely needed, or else there were sufficient funds to build the garden but not to maintain it. There are other problems with this rose garden, as well. There are no trees in the rose garden, so that it lacks shade on a hot summer day, and there are no benches or other places to sit. Further, the concentric form leaves an empty circle in the middle, which in most gardens would contain a fountain or a statue. Here, however, not only is there no focal piece, but the center is an empty, paved-over circle that looks like a parking lot. With no place to sit, no place to get out of the sun, and a center that would be more appropriate for cars than for people, this garden offers little place, and little emplacement, to a human person. When I was there, there were a few people in other parts of the Guadalupe Gardens, but not a soul in the Heritage Rose Garden. It is a sad place, because it could be so much more with a little shade, a few benches, some pruning, and something other than cement in the middle.

San Jose's Municipal Rose Garden is about a mile and a half from the Guadalupe Gardens and a world away (figure 4.27). It is in a pleasant residential neighborhood, with an attractive wrought-iron and brick gate, benches to sit on, grass underfoot, trees along the edges with more shade-covered benches, a focal fountain in the center, and well-tended rose bushes. While the upscale residential context might raise issues of exclusion, there were people in the garden with a significant variety of apparent racial, class, and ethnic backgrounds. This is peopled place, where both the plants and the humans seem to rest more contently.

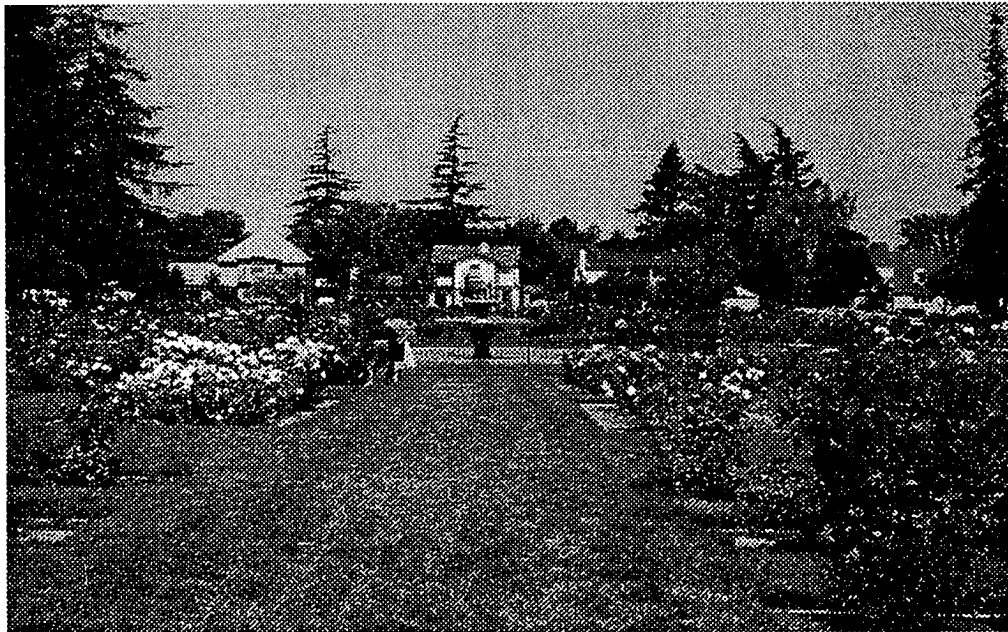


Figure 4.27  
San Jose Municipal Rose Garden  
San Jose, California

## Gardens at Museums and Sacred Spaces

In sorting the gardens of this study into types, I found it appropriate to combine gardens at museums and in religious settings for two reasons. First, the two are at times combined: the Bryn Athyn Cathedral has a medieval museum on its grounds, and the Rosicrucian Park has both a temple and an Egyptian museum on the property. Second, the word “museum” comes from the Greek word meaning “Temple of the Muses,”<sup>21</sup> so that museums are also in a sense sacred spaces, as we give homage to what we value historically or culturally. The study gardens included in this category are two in Pennsylvania and four in California: the wildflower garden at the Brandywine River Museum, the gardens at the Mormon Temple in Oakland, the grounds of Bryn Athyn Cathedral, the Oakland Museum of California, Yerba Buena Gardens in San Francisco, and Rosicrucian Park in San Jose. The styles of these gardens run the gambit from urban postmodern to ancient Egyptian.

The Brandywine River Museum, a repository for paintings by Wyeth and other artists of the “Brandywine School,” is in an old grist mill on the banks of the Brandywine River in Pennsylvania. The property is planted with native plants and wildflowers in a naturalistic style associated with the landscapes painted by these artists.<sup>22</sup> This garden is in a style so naturalistic that it may seem accidental, and it pushes the limits of definition, since the “excess of form” from Miller’s working definition of “garden” is almost absent. At the opposite end of the spectrum is the garden at the Mormon Temple in Oakland California, a formal Victorian design of a straight axis of bright annual flowers ending in a view of the temple. The suburban Philadelphian grounds of the Bryn Athyn Cathedral, of the Swedenborgian religion, exhibits the simple curves of the English Landscape style, a composition of lawn and

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<sup>21</sup> William Morris, ed., *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*, New College Edition (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1980).

<sup>22</sup> Klein, *Gardens of Philadelphia and the Delaware Valley*.

trees surrounding a huge cathedral in the style of fourteenth century Gothic with twelfth century Romanesque wings (figure 4.28). The building would have impressed those English Romantics whose garden ideal included picturesque Gothic architecture.

The terraced rooftop gardens of the Oakland Museum of California take us far from the ornate rustic style of the Gothic to the heavy concrete of modernism (figure 4.29). Architecture dominates this garden as much as it does the Bryn Athyn garden, but while the architecture of the cathedral is set within the garden, at the Oakland Museum the reverse is true: the garden is set within the architecture. The rooftop garden is as simple as the landscape garden but could never be mistaken for it, consisting predominantly of solid gray concrete with green shrubbery and a scattering of modern art, much of it in rusted metal. As much as it differs from the Bryn Athyn landscape, it shares with it the sense of scale oversized for the human body.

Postmodern architecture loses much of the starkness and over-scale of modernism, and this is reflected in the landscape of San Francisco's Yerba Buena Gardens (figure 4.30).<sup>23</sup> Yerba Buena Gardens and the Center for the Arts is a contemporary public plaza with much more poetic detail and a much more human scale than the Oakland Museum. With a variety of materials and patterns, multiple levels, comfortable spaces for people to be in, effectively borrowed downtown landscape (similar to Oklahoma City's Myriad Gardens), and cultural references such as a Martin Luther King memorial behind an artificial waterfall and a Native American meditation garden, Yerba Buena gardens reflects the pluralistic postmodern ethic. It works effectively as a creative, poetic, emplacing garden.

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<sup>23</sup> Michael J. Schmandt, "Postmodernism and the Transformation of Phoenix, Arizona," paper presented at the annual meeting of the Association of American Geographers, Charlotte, North Carolina, April 10, 1996; Jon Goss, "Modernity and Post-Modernity in the Retail Landscape," in *Inventing Places: Studies in Cultural Geography*, ed. Kay Anderson and Fay Gale (Melbourne, Australia: Longman Cheshire; [New York]: Halsted Press, Wiley, 1992).



Figure 4.28  
Bryn Athyn Cathedral  
Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania  
Architecture in Gothic (left) and Romanesque (right) styles  
with grounds in an English Landscape style

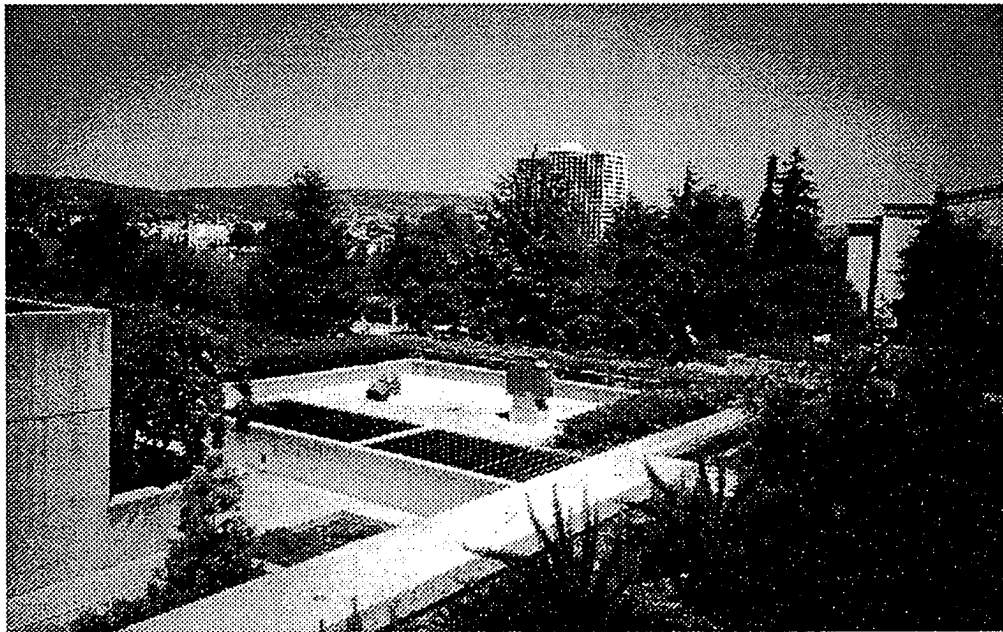


Figure 4.29  
Oakland Museum of California  
Rooftop garden with modern art



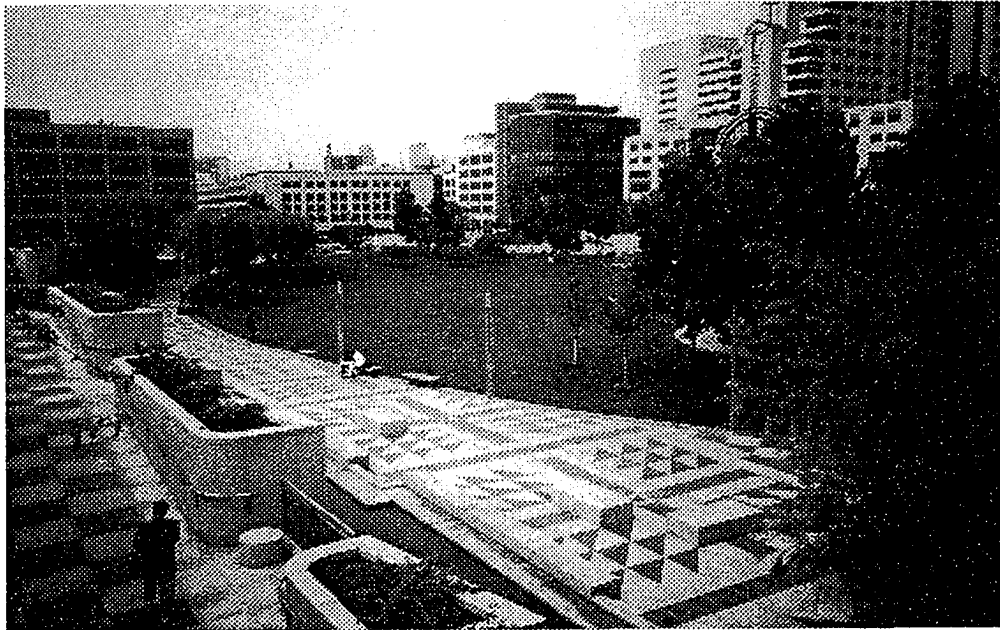


Figure 4.30  
Yerba Buena Gardens  
San Francisco, California  
Postmodernist styling,  
City skyline as borrowed landscape

While in San Jose, California, I happened upon a very unusual garden at the Rosicrucian Temple and Egyptian Museum, located between the two rose gardens described above. Rosicrucianism is a mystery religion based on Egyptian mythology and practices, and the Rosicrucian Park in San Jose has gardens set among the neo-Egyptian architecture of the museum and religious buildings. While, as noted above, the less familiar forms of a Spanish style garden in the United States gives strength to a poetic pause, Spanish gardens are not nearly as out-of-the-ordinary as this Egyptian garden, clearly the most unusual of any of the study gardens (figures 4.31-4.). Established in 1927, the five acres of Rosicrucian Park hold the North American headquarters of the Rosicrucian Order, a planetarium, and the Egyptian Museum, “the only museum in the world designed in an authentic Egyptian architectural style,” featuring a large collection of Egyptian, Assyrian, and Babylonia antiquities.<sup>24</sup> While plants in the gardens are many of the same seen in other gardens—palm trees, roses, lawns, petunias, cactus, etc.—the art and architecture which surround them are so unusual as to evoke a stunned response of awe. Here, Bachelard’s idea that the poetic image exists on the edge between reality and unreality takes concrete form.<sup>25</sup> It would be easier to grasp, somehow, if this were merely a theme park, which would be a more familiar form, but it is not. I saw a man sitting on the bench, eating his lunch: perhaps repeated exposure would turn this fantastic landscape into a more familiar experience. As a first-time visitor, however, I experienced a different kind of emplacement, in which the senses of the poetic imagination were overstimulated, unable to settle down because of the degree of novelty of the images surrounding me. The novelty of the poetic image here reaches its extreme.

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<sup>24</sup> Rosicrucian Order, AMORC, Official Home Page (<http://www.rosicrucian.org/>).

<sup>25</sup> Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, trans. Maria Jolas (Boston: Beacon Press, 1969).



Figure 4.31  
Rosicrucian Park  
San Jose, California  
Entrance gates

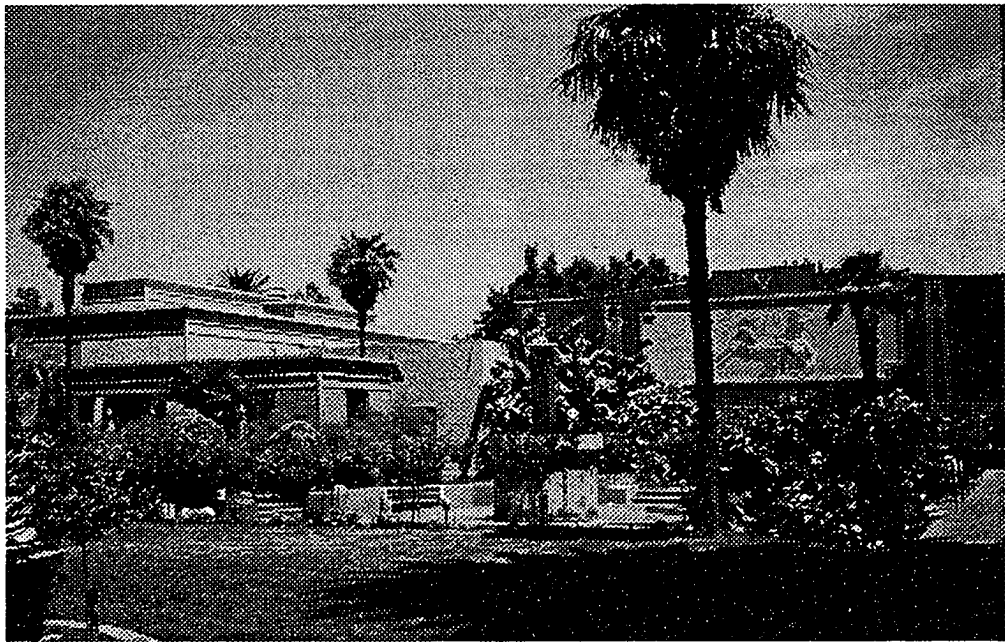


Figure 4.32  
Rosicrucian Park  
Gardens and Egyptian architecture

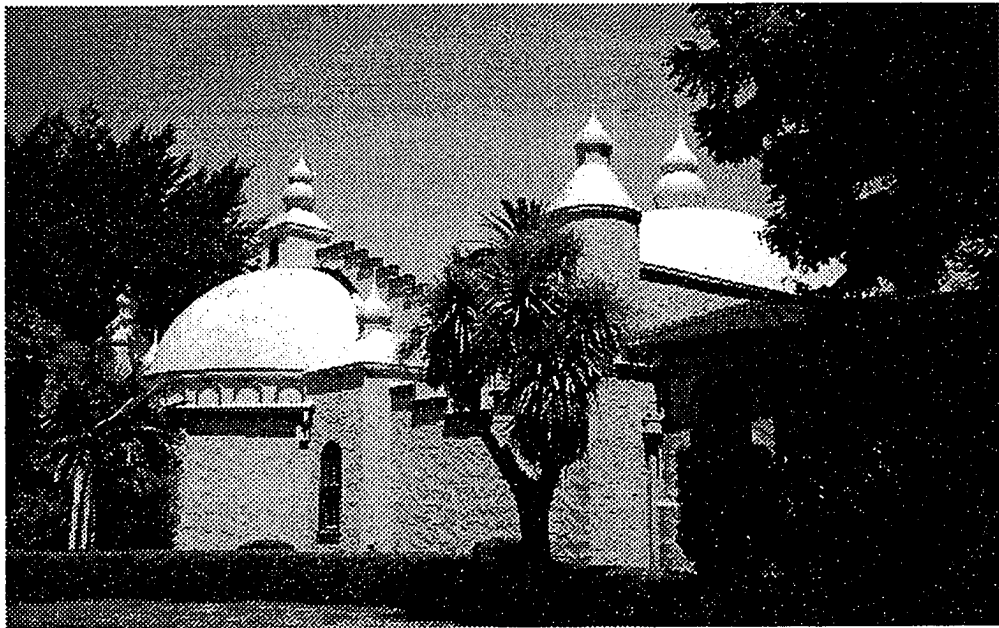


Figure 4.33  
Rosicrucian Park  
Planetarium



Figure 4.34  
Rosicrucian Park  
Egyptian Museum

### **Private Gardens Turned Public**

Many of the most renowned gardens in the country were once private gardens, often estate gardens built by American industrialists and financiers during the Country Place Era, from the 1880's to the 1920's. One of the most prominent of these is Pierre du Pont's Longwood Gardens, which will be described in detail the next chapter. Here I will more briefly review the other study gardens from the Country Place Era, as well as some other gardens of a similar type, built before or after that time period. Most of these gardens, built by the American wealthy, draw explicitly from one or more European styles, inspired by gardens encountered during travels in Europe. Some of the American gardens are in one predominant style, while others follow the Victorian eclectic tradition of themed gardens of various styles brought together on one property. In all cases but one, these gardens built as private estates are now administered by non-profit foundations and open to the public for a fee.

Two other du Pont gardens, built by cousins of the creator of Longwood in the same Brandywine Valley bordering Pennsylvania and Delaware, are Nemours and Winterthur. Nemours is an extremely formal French garden, while Winterthur is an excellent example of an informal English garden. These styles bring the two gardens together as derivative European expressions, even as they differ in form of design. Both have mansions now run as museums.

Winterthur has two large naturalistic areas: one wooded and the other open grassland dotted with trees and accented with lakes, an thoroughly Brownian landscape (figure 4.35). There is also a rock garden built in an abandoned quarry and a formal garden by the house that is a reflection of the Victorian rage for the Italian Renaissance Revival style. There is a sense of exclusivity and social formality at Winterthur, even though the gardens are mostly informal. This impression began as I approached the



Figure 4.35  
Winterthur Gardens  
Wilmington, Delaware  
“Clenny Run”  
English Landscape style garden



ticket desk in the "Visitor Pavilion," to find out about admission to the gardens. As they offered me various tours of the mansion and museum, I was made to feel that I was purchasing "just" the general admission, which included access to the grounds and to some of the art galleries as well a garden tram tour. The tram tour covers the highlights of the garden, which can then be seen in more detail on foot, though I was one of only a few people to hike through the garden that hot summer day. Walking through the garden was rather confusing, even with map in hand, as the signs pointed back to various buildings but rarely to parts of the garden I wanted to find. There were also some odd, displacing, elements to the garden, such as a gravel path that abruptly ended in grass. Only because I caught a glimpse of a bench ahead through the trees did I feel inclined to continue past the end of the way, to be rewarded with a view out of the woods into the open landscape part of the garden and the flock of Canadian geese occupying it. Walking on to the quarry garden, I found it a refreshing, intimate change from the huge landscapes and long vistas of the rest of the garden. Here the sounds of the geese and other birds, the amplified voice of the tram tour guide driving by, and the distant sounds of lawn mowers, leaf blowers, and a construction crew working on the property are muted by the music of the water trickling through the old quarry now in bloom with wildflowers.

While Winterthur has somewhat a feeling of exclusivity and stuffiness, this feeling is multiplied at Nemours, the other du Pont estate a few miles away. Nemours is accessible only by guided tour, most often requiring a reservation in advance, and it is not open to anyone under the age of seventeen. These restrictions place Nemours beyond the reach of the families that often frequent zoological gardens or other more inclusive gardens such as Longwood or the Dallas Botanical Gardens, and it also excludes any tourist who might happen to drop by without a reservation. I arrived in

the morning to find the next tour full, but there was one place left on the afternoon tour. The aristocratic atmosphere that is apparent even before setting sight on the gardens themselves may be a fitting complement to the formal French style of the mansion and gardens that trace their inspiration to the expression of absolute power that was the Sun King's Versailles (figures 4.36 and 4.37). There were indeed family ties to Louis XIV and Marie Antoinette, whose portraits still hang in the mansion at Nemours. A clock in the foyer was originally commissioned by Marie Antoinette, and one of the chandeliers in the house is in the sunburst design that was the symbol of the Sun King. This mansion and garden in the Brandywine Valley are an expression of nostalgia by Alfred I. du Pont for aristocratic France and the du Pont ancestral home at Nemours, France. The chateau and gardens are a Versailles in miniature, with a main axis extending out from the house for one-third of a mile and some elements that are exact copies from Versailles.<sup>26</sup> This particular style of garden, from the neoclassical, monarchical France of Louis XIV and the objectivist Enlightenment of Descartes, does not foster the kind of nonjective emplacement that is the focus of this dissertation. Instead, it becomes an object viewed from the distance, even when one is standing within it.

Another Country Place estate, Bellingrath Gardens near Mobile, Alabama, is a collection of themed gardens again reflecting the Victorian penchant for European eclecticism and floral intensity. The Spanish Colonial Revival house, in brick with the wrought-iron lacework common to Gulf Coast colonial architecture, as in New Orleans' French Quarter or in Savannah, Georgia, is set in sixty-five acres of gardens within the nine-hundred acre estate on the Fowl River (figure 4.38).<sup>27</sup> There is a rose garden, "great lawn" with floral borders, Italian water garden, grotto, terraces by the

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<sup>26</sup> Murray Alcusser and Phoebe Cutler, *America In Bloom: Great American Gardens Open to the Public* (New York: Rizzoli, 1991).

<sup>27</sup> The Bellingrath-Morse Foundation, *Bellingrath Gardens and Home: A Pictorial Story in Color, The Garden for All Seasons* (Mobile, AL: The Bellingrath-Morse Foundation, 1987).



Figure 4.36  
Nemours  
Wilmington, Delaware  
Classical French Garden  
Main axis, from the mansion

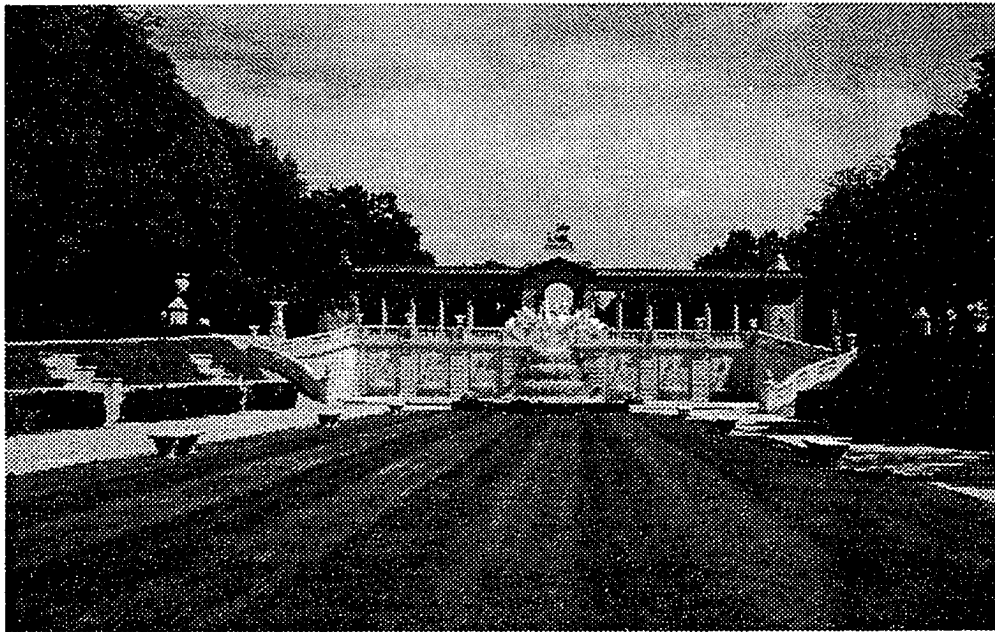


Figure 4.37  
Nemours  
“Sunken Garden”



Figure 4.38  
Bellingrath Gardens  
Mobile, Alabama  
Spanish Colonia Revival House  
and South Terrace

house, rockery, “Oriental-American” garden, and a landscaped lake, among other gardens on the property, all landscaped with abundant flowers in bright colors, usually in red, yellow, and orange. This is a show garden in the Victorian spirit, intended to be stunning rather than relaxing. The focus is on color, not texture or foliage, in a formal setting: the mixed border has had little or no influence here. It is therefore a garden of the eye more than the touch. Unlike the Dallas Botanical Garden, which had a bold floral display tempered by cooler areas like the fern dell, Bellingrath gardens is more unified, with bright colors running throughout its many gardens.

The Blake Garden in Berkeley, California, is another Country Place Era garden built around a Spanish Colonial Revival house, in this case with a more Mexican influence. This garden uses texture as Bellingrath does not, and it is more sparing in the use of color (figure 4.39). More modest than the huge country estates of the period like Bellingrath or the du Pont gardens, the ten-acre Blake estate has been since 1967 the official residence of the president of the University of California.<sup>28</sup> This garden is the exception among these private-to-public gardens in the study; it is administered by a university rather than a non-profit organization, it is still used as a residence, and it is open to the public free of charge. In front of the Blake house is a small Italian garden with a rectangular pool and a grotto at the end, while the terraced hillside behind the house, with spectacular views of the San Francisco Bay, is much less formal. Other parts of the garden consist of trails meandering through woods, past wildflowers and picturesque rocks, and through other informal or semi-formal gardens. This is garden Jekyll and Robinson would have liked, with much attention to the varying forms, foliage, and textures of the plants, as well as the color of the flowers. Figures 4.40-4.43 illustrate some of the textures of the Blake garden that evoke a poetics of touch, merging the eye, the hand, and the garden in a multisensory emplacement. One round

<sup>28</sup> Mulligan, *Complete Guide to North American Gardens: The West Coast*



Figure 4.39  
Blake Estate  
Berkeley, California  
Terraces and back of house



Figure 4.40  
Blake Estate  
Texture: bark on tree branch





Figure 4.41  
Blake Estate  
Texture: Rock and wildflowers



Figure 4.42  
Blake Estate  
Texture: Deck, shrub, boys in tree



Figure 4.43  
Blake Estate  
Texture: arches

pool was so thoroughly covered in green algae topped with fallen leaves that it looked solid, drawing my touch of curiosity to find out if there really was water in the pool (figure 4.44). It was indeed algae covering water, repulsive to the touch. The garden had drawn me into its textures, more fully engaging me in-place.

Filoli, a Country Place Era estate in the hills above Stanford University in Woodside, California, is a formal garden that combines English and Italian elements in a series of garden “rooms.”<sup>29</sup> The estate is familiar to many television viewers as the setting of “Dynasty.”<sup>30</sup> Of particular interest are a garden designed as a replica of stained glass in Chartres Cathedral, an allée of Irish Yews, and a “knot garden,” a medieval form in which herbaceous flowering plants twist around each other to form knot-like patterns (figure 4.45). Filoli has a number of strong poetic elements that contribute to both emplacement and displacement. As in the Blake garden, complex textures are an emplacing poetic. Underfoot, textures range from brick to wood chips, grass, and old patio tiles with plants growing up through the cracks, all of which juxtapose against various foliage textures (figure 4.46, 4.47). The variations in foliage draw the hand to follow the eye; in figure 4.48 a boy tests the featheriness of a shrub. In one isolated corner of the garden, a camperdown elm bends low to the ground to create an intimate internal space (figure 4.49).

Even as these qualities of place draw one into emplacement, other qualities of the encounter with Filoli interrupt the poetic being-with-in-place. This begins at the entrance to the property, when the gardens are still a long driveway ahead, as a representative of the National Trust for Historic Preservation collects money and hands out an entire page full of rules and regulations, including prohibitions against walking

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<sup>29</sup> Alcosser and Cutler, *America In Bloom*.

<sup>30</sup> Mac Griswold and Eleanor Weller, *The Golden Age of American Gardens: Proud Owners, Private Estates, 1890-1940* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc. and The Garden Club of America, 1991).



Figure 4.44  
Blake Estate  
Circular pool covered with algae and leaves  
Yes, there is water underneath



Figure 4.45  
Filoli  
Woodside, California  
Medieval-style knot garden



Figure 4.46  
Filoli  
Texture: wood chip path



Figure 4.47  
Filoli  
Texture: plants growing through cracks  
in the tiles on this terrace by the house





Figure 4.48  
Filoli

This boy could not resist the temptation to touch the foliage.  
Does it feel as feathery as it looks?

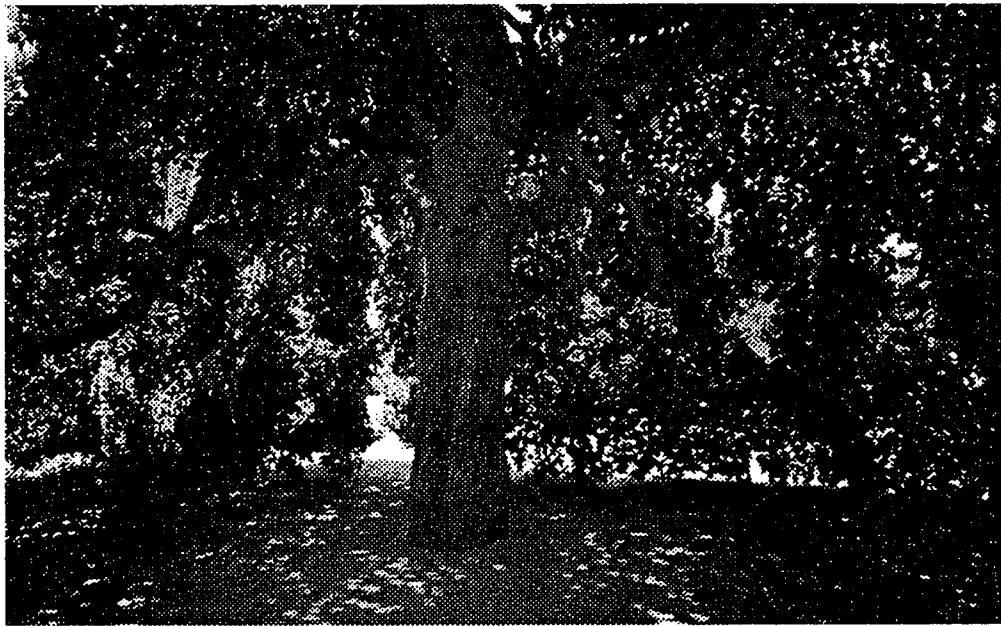


Figure 4.49  
Filoli  
This Camperdown Elm creates an “inside” space

on the grass or straying from the garden walkways. This turns out to be a significant restriction in the first part of the garden one encounters, the Sunken Garden, which has a very narrow brick walkway around the edge. One cannot stop to look at something without blocking people coming up behind, while anyone else who stops will be in the way because there is no room to pass. There are a number of other places in the garden where the poetics of movement is interrupted as well, with pathways that reach dead ends or are blocked by “do not enter” signs. For example, the appealing wood-chip walkway in figure 4.46 comes to an abrupt, unnatural end with a barrier that interferes with emplacing movement through and into the garden, requiring one to turn around and edge past the people coming the other way. The yew allée has a chain across the front that clashes with the way the form draws one to move down the allée. These displacing qualities of Filoli tend to give it a sense of “do not touch,” like some museum piece under glass, a way of relating that works against other poetic qualities in the garden that draw one into place. So, the poetic logos of Filoli, as it speaks to emplacement, is somewhat self-contradictory; textures and other emplacing qualities of the garden come up against the arresting influence of blocked movement.

Finally, I have included a number of private-to-public gardens in Louisiana in this group of study gardens. Of these, the garden at Rosedown Plantation, is the oldest, built in the 1830's and restored after 1956.<sup>31</sup> The garden of Rosedown is largely formal, with an oak allée, neoclassical statuary, a gazebo, and parterres near the house, as seen from the second floor in figure 4.50. Behind the house, however, is a lake surrounded by grass and trees, forming a very Brownian English landscape scene. There is also a kitchen garden that illustrates the practical element of gardening.

Elsewhere in Louisiana, built a century or more later, Avery Island's Jungle Gardens,

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<sup>31</sup> Suzanne Turner and A. J. Meek, *The Gardens of Louisiana: Places of Work and Wonder* (Baton Rouge and London: Louisiana State University Press, 1997).



Figure 4.50  
Rosedown Plantation  
St. Francisville, Louisiana  
Parterre, from second story.

the Live Oak Gardens on Jefferson Island, and the azalea- and camellia-laden Zemurray Gardens all follow more informal naturalistic styles, in forms more fluid than the Brownian landscape garden, generally wooded with occasional statues or follies as accents. Hodges Gardens, a more recent construction in a huge abandoned sandstone quarry in western Louisiana, contains a 225-acre lake and semi-formal gardens within a larger forested area. Finally, Longue Vue, in New Orleans, combines influences from Spanish, Portuguese, English, Italian, and American gardens with modern as well as classical art as a setting for the Greek Revival house.<sup>32</sup>

### **The Garden Poetic, The Garden Emplacing**

These places are where the idea “garden” comes into being, where poetic images of the nature-culture mélange that is a garden emerge into their reality not only as physical environments, but as poetic being arising in the relation between place and the creating imagination. The themes conveyed in these images are many: experiential space within the garden, as in the transition from meadow to forest in Tilden Botanical garden; the shift from the mental birds-eye view of a map to the embodied ground view of the garden encountered; the comprehensibility or “legibility” of a place; context as experienced within and beyond the garden and as oriented upon the body; the role of the multi-faceted sense of touch in drawing one into-place and in conveying richness of texture; the hand and the foot; borrowed landscape, whether natural, urban or industrial, effective or ineffective; moods such as mystery, whimsy, peace, or drama; enclosure; soundscapes; formality and informality; the delight of children and the romance of lovers; political undertones and social exclusivities; shape, form, texture, and color; attention and the need for centers of focus; complexity and simplicity; and dis-placement as well as emplacement. Discovering a garden, like reading a poem, is a

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<sup>32</sup> Griswold and Weller, *The Golden Age of American Gardens*; Alcosser and Cutler, *America In Bloom*.

participation in the creative emergence of poetic images that arise anew around every corner and with every flicker of the attention or the imagination. These gardens offer extraordinary experiences that transport us into poetic realms, just as the extraordinary language of poetry brings poetic knowing and poetic being out of the novelty of ordinary life.

## CHAPTER FIVE LONGWOOD GARDENS

William Mulligan calls Longwood Gardens, in Kennett Square, Pennsylvania, the “undisputed flagship of America’s botanic gardens.”<sup>1</sup> One of the du Pont gardens of the Brandywine Valley bordering Pennsylvania and Delaware, Longwood was created by Pierre S. du Pont (1870-1954), an engineer by training, who participated in the du Pont family’s passion for horticulture as well as in the family business built upon the manufacture of gunpowder in the Brandywine Valley.<sup>2</sup> Within the total property of over one thousand acres, the gardens encompass 350 acres, with three and one-half acres of indoor gardens in the extensive Longwood conservatories. Pierre du Pont, who designed most of the gardens himself, took inspiration from the gardens of Italy, France, and Spain, as well as from World’s Fairs he had attended. The original nucleus of the property, Peirce’s Park, was purchased in 1906 to protect the collection of trees from logging threats. Du Pont then began to construct gardens on the property around the original arboretum. He was fascinated by fountains, and there are several spectacular fountain gardens at Longwood, including an Italian Water Garden based on the Villa Gamberaia outside Florence, an open air theater with hundreds of hidden fountains modelled after the Villa Gori near Siena, Italy, and the Main Fountain Garden that was inspired by the water gardens at Versailles, with some Italian elements incorporated as well. The Main Fountain Garden has some 380 fountain heads which can propel up to ten thousand gallons per minute, as high as 130 feet in the air.<sup>3</sup> The

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<sup>1</sup> William C. Mulligan, *The Complete Guide to North American Gardens*, vol. 1, *The Northeast* (Boston, Toronto, London: Little, Brown and Co., for Running Heads Inc., 1991), 91.

<sup>2</sup> Colvin Randall and Larry Albee, *Longwood Gardens* (Kennett Square, Penn.: Longwood Gardens, Inc., 1995); Murray Alcasser and Phoebe Cutler, *America In Bloom: Great American Gardens Open to the Public* (New York: Rizzoli, 1991); William Klein, Jr., *Gardens of Philadelphia and the Delaware Valley* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1995).

<sup>3</sup> Randall and Albee, *Longwood Gardens*.

other gardens at Longwood run the range from formal to informal, from flower gardens to woodlands, topiary, and wildflower meadows.

Longwood was never as private as were many other gardens of the Country Place Era: Pierre du Pont intended the gardens to be shared, and he constantly had visitors. In contrast to his cousins' estate, Nemours, which is surrounded by a high wall topped with broken glass rumored to keep out unwanted relatives, Longwood was constantly open to family and others, and many children spent the summer on the estate. Longwood also differs from Nemours and Winterthur in that the house is much more modest than the mansions on the other two family properties. In 1946, Pierre du Pont handed operation of the gardens over to the Longwood Foundation, with the charge that it was to be "for the sole use of the public for purposes of exhibition, instruction, education and enjoyment."<sup>4</sup> These purposes continue nearly a half century after the founder's death, with a great many people visiting the garden daily, as well as botanical research and hybridization projects, educational programs including degrees offered through the University of Delaware, and entertainment programs including musical concerts and theater.<sup>5</sup>

While these facts give some useful background on Longwood as a place, and the works cited provide a more detailed history of the garden, the poetics of place at Longwood are better revealed, and its spirits of place discovered, by a virtual tour of the garden at an experiential level. This description is a composite of impressions from the total of about twenty-four hours I spent at Longwood, over two days in July, 1998. Like the briefer descriptions of gardens in the previous chapter, this more detailed consideration of one particular garden is an evocation of the place that is neither

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<sup>4</sup> *ibid.*, 6.

<sup>5</sup> Klein, *Gardens of Philadelphia and the Delaware Valley*.



exhaustive nor definitive, with the intention of teasing out some of the poetic qualities and emplacing aesthetics to be found as being-in the garden.

### Entering

A garden, as enclosed space, is to some degree separate from the world around it, even somewhat separate from the world of everyday reality. To arrive at the garden, therefore, is to go through a process of transition that moves one into a different kind of space, while also transitioning into a different kind of being, a state more poetic than prosaic. In this light, entering a garden takes on a sense of ritual. Longwood, like most of these public gardens, is a place to go to intentionally—a sort of pilgrimage—not something you merely happen upon. I find my way down Pennsylvania Highway 1, and Longwood has its own offramp. Proceeding to the parking lot, finding a place to leave the car that might be in the shade this afternoon, gathering up things to taken into the garden, and locking up the car: these rituals signal leaving the workaday world behind for a different, more pedestrian realm. Next is the garden “gate” that keeps out and lets in, holding back and inviting through (figure 5.1).<sup>6</sup> At Longwood, as at most public gardens, the form of the gate is a visitor center with a gift shop, restrooms, and a ticket desk. One door leads out to the parking lot and another leads into the gardens. I make my offering to the gods of the garden, collect my map/guide to the gardens ( the order of worship?), and enter sacred space. If you look back to the visitor center from within the garden, a garden enclosure trick has been played: you see but a hole in a grass-covered hill that buries the building and hides the parking lot beyond (figure 5.2). In this garden realm, there is no outside world.

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<sup>6</sup> Rosemary Verey, *The Garden Gate* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1991).

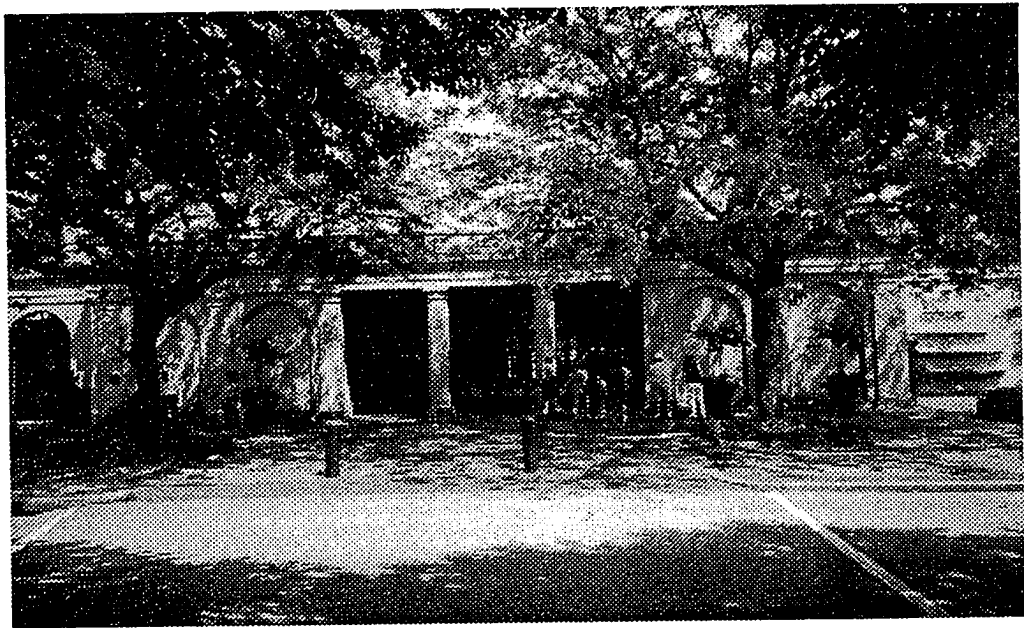


Figure 5.1  
Longwood Gardens  
Kennett Square Pennsylvania  
Visitor Center from the outside



Figure 5.2  
Longwood Gardens  
Visitor Center from the inside  
The building is hidden by the berm.  
Surrounding: English Landscape style

## First Things

The broad cement walkway brings me out of the building into a landscape of lawn and trees. Capability Brown is haunting us again, as the straight lines of the visitor center give way to curving lines and a simple English Landscape of lawn and trees. A remarkable American Elm is the first stop on the self-guided tour of Longwood's "heritage trees," if that is your cup of tea. I am following the general self-guided tour instead, which divides the gardens into three tours: the East Loop, Conservatory, and West Loop tours, each with an estimated one and one-half hour walking time.<sup>7</sup> As a map follower, I start at the beginning, taking the East Loop, to the right. It takes me to the first stop in the guide, the Open Air Theater. As I found when I later returned to see the short fountain show, many water jets are hidden in the stage floor, and a six-foot water "curtain" in front of the stage substitutes for the traditional drapery during performances. One evening as I left the garden, there was a rehearsal for the musical "Carousel" taking place on this stage.

A little sign among the plants on the way to the Peirce-du Pont house, repeated elsewhere in the garden, explains Longwood's "natural pest control" system: "The cats you see in the gardens are Longwood 'employees' working in our integrated Pest Management Program. In return for maintaining a vigorous rodent patrol, they receive excellent pay and benefits." The sign proceeds to explain how the cats are cared for and requests that visitors not distract them while they are working. Details in a garden, small or large, often act a diversions along the way, demonstrating the process-oriented quality of poetic experience.

The Peirce-du Pont house is a 1730 brick farmhouse later expanded by Pierre du Pont, who enclosed the patio to form the garden's first, small conservatory. Behind the house is Peirce's Park, the collection of trees that du Pont bought the property to

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<sup>7</sup> "Longwood Gardens: Self-Guided Tour" (Kennett Square, Penn.: Longwood Gardens, Inc., 1993).

save. While most of the park is an informal woodland setting, a traditional-style fountain and some straight alleys of trees contribute an element of formality as well. A large conifer that had formed a big circular carpet of needles and cones as far out as its branches would reach, a distinct territory carved out of the surrounding lawn, creates one of the pausing images in these woods (figure 5.3).

### **Flower Walk**

Nearby is the Flower Garden Walk, the first garden du Pont created on the property, in 1907 (figure 5.4). The herringbone brick walk down the center of the long garden is about wide enough for four people to walk abreast. This is one of the most densely peopled parts of Longwood, with a great variety of people in age, race, ethnicity, and nationality, speaking various languages. I saw, for example, a family from India and an Amish family, both in traditional dress. Despite the large number of people who visit the garden, it is easy to find quiet places, but the Flower Walk is not one of them. As a garden “walk,” this is a place to stroll: not meandering informally as in the Japanese Garden in Fort Worth, but along the straight axis of the garden. Flower beds are themed by color, with a mix of annual and perennial flowers, shrubs, and ornamental grasses, create a progression along the length of the walk. Blues, lavenders, and purples on both sides of the walk lead into reds and pinks, oranges and yellows, and finally a section all in white, extravagantly elegant and understated after the parade of colors. The garden walk terminates at a semicircular “whispering bench” with remarkable acoustics, backed by a “wall” formed by a hedge with two arches opening into the next garden.

The linear form of the Flower Walk at Longwood draws both the feet and the eyes along its length, creating movement and attention along that line. The form of the garden thus brings a visitor into a spatial relationship that follows this particular pattern,

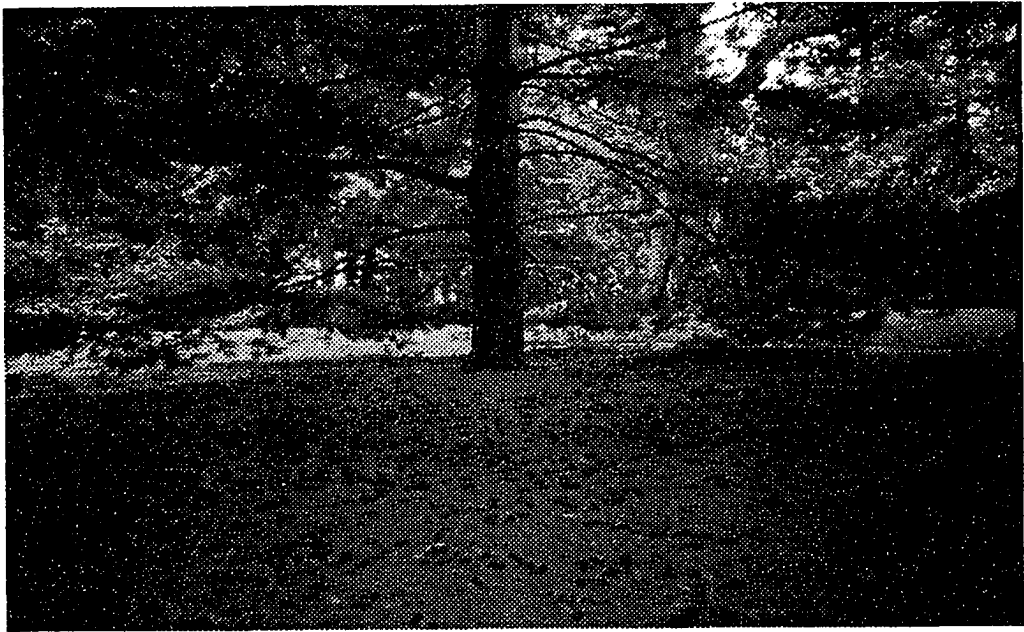


Figure 5.3  
Longwood Gardens  
This tree laid down a circular carpet  
of needles and cones



Figure 5.4  
Longwood Gardens  
Flower Garden Walk  
The mix of people mirrors the mix of flowering plants

in contrast to gardens that present a different spatial experience. The spatial encounter with a garden may fall into one of three modes: centrifugal, centripetal, and linear. A centrifugal garden, which I named after “centrifugal force,” pulls outward from the center. This type of brings a person to view the garden from the middle, looking out toward the edges. The experiential “force” in a centripetal garden is the opposite: one’s attention is drawn from the edges of the garden toward the center. Finally, a linear garden moves one through along a straight or curved line. Another way to conceptualize these three spatial forms of the garden, these three experiential “forces,” is to use an analogy from geomorphology rather than physics, with drainage patterns. First, water running off a round hill or a volcano forms a radial pattern, moving out from the center. Second, water flowing into a lake in a basin or crater runs toward the center from the edges. Finally, an established river moves through the landscape in quasi-linear fashion.<sup>8</sup> These three patterns, centrifugal, centripetal, and linear, describe three ways of how we spatially engage with a garden--how we move into a garden with our attention, our bodies, and our senses. One flows through the Flower Garden Walk as a linear garden, with an occasional “eddy” pausing along the way.

### **The East End: English and Italian**

One of the arches by the whispering bench brings me through to a small brick patio with a square of patterned rock in the middle. After the stimulation of the flower garden, this is a more muted and calm place which transitions into the very informal space of the woods beyond it. There, meandering trails lead down to a lake with a little circular “love temple” beside it, just the image of an eighteenth-century English landscape garden (figure 5.5). The path around the lake offers changing angles on the

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<sup>8</sup> Arthur Bloom, *Geomorphology: A Systematic Analysis of Late Cenozoic Landforms* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: 1978).





Figure 5.5  
Longwood Gardens  
“Love Temple” beside a lake  
Picturesque

picturesque scene until I reach the opposite end of the lake and my attention moves ahead, from England to Italy.

At the far end of the lake from the love temple that anchors the English landscape scene is the beginning of the Italian Water Garden: an architectural terrace even with the level of the lake behind it looks down upon the Italian garden below (figure 5.6). It is a parterre of water and grass with fountain jets that continually change patterns and height. This garden is the most architectural of any so far at Longwood, in keeping with the Italian Renaissance style. Around one end of the terrace is pathway down into the Italian Water garden, while around the other end is a “water staircase” for the water to rush down a flight of steps from the upper to the lower level. Many people gather atop the terrace to look at the garden below, so that this is a centripetal garden, drawing the eye toward the center from the edge.

From down within the garden, architectural detailing against the terrace wall, with fountains, arches, ivy on trellises, and urns, adds aspects of interest to the garden that cannot be seen from above (figure 5.7). It is the patterns and details of architectural elements and fountains that provide texture and interest in this garden, rather than plants, which play a more minor part. Ivy borders the pools with narrow green bands and forms the edges of the garden, beneath littleleaf linden trees. The rest is lawn among the fountains. Five stone frogs sit sentinel in the lawn about the largest fountain. The *genius loci* of this place clearly belongs to the spirits of the element water. Any water sprite would be happy here except one that wanted to sit still; the water shoots up into the air, arches into pools and fountains, pours into little side pools, dribbles from urns, and rushes down the steps of the water staircase.

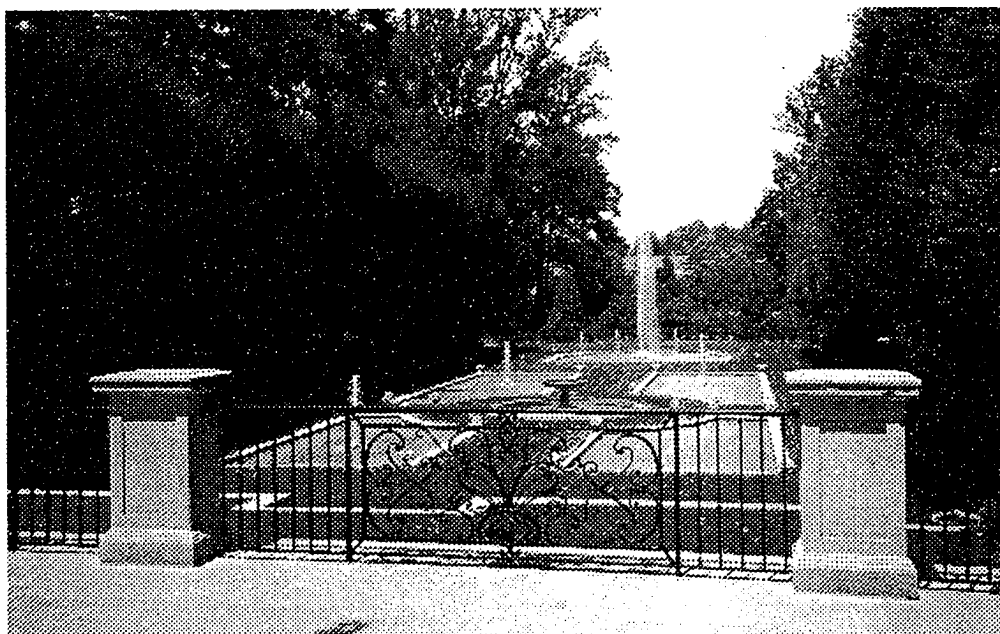


Figure 5.6  
Longwood Gardens  
Italian Water Garden from above

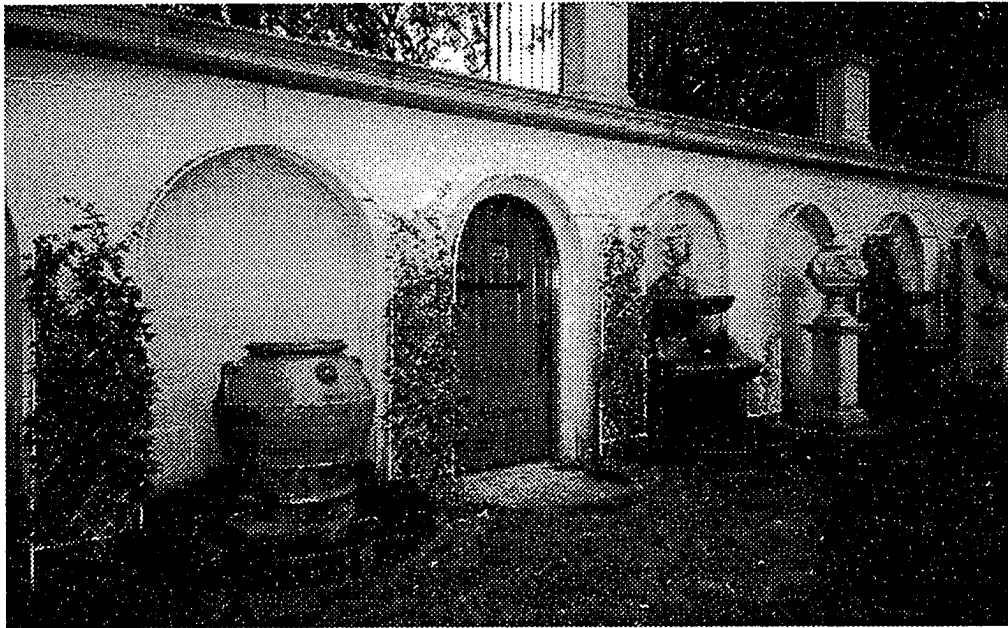


Figure 5.7  
Longwood Gardens  
Italian Water Garden  
ornaments against the wall  
visible from within the garden

## Meadow

The woods, again are a canopied passageway, now leading me to the meadow, land on the edge of the gardens that was cleared in the colonial era for crops and pasturage. It is a large area, sharply demarcated by the dense trees that surround it, a hint of the management that keeps the forest from encroaching into the meadow (figure 5.8). The vegetation rises to knee- or waist-high, and birds with high-pitched voices, hidden from the eye but full to the ear, call deep within the greenery. The meadow spoke its poetry to me:

### Longwood Meadow

"Leave behind the tall shade of the woods;  
Forsake, for me, the neat clipped lawn,"  
Beckons the meadow, brightly muted,  
Barely clothed against the summer sun.

I succumb to her tempting  
And her vastness swallows me in a few steps.  
I sink to my knees  
In the heavy stillness, enwrapping meadow.

Now and then, little birds appear  
Above the dense meadow mesh,  
And butterflies dance across the top.  
But riotous purples rise, and yellow daisies hide.

Delicate whites and bold pale pinks,  
Blue the dragonfly, brown the grasses,  
But it is green that reigns,  
Everywhere.

It is very quiet, muggy and still,  
Not a breeze.  
Yet busy with birds and bees,  
And what stirs beneath the rush of greens?

And there are gnats, to buzz and fly,  
And swarm to chase the strangers out.  
Never hold still for a moment,  
Or they find me.



Figure 5.8  
Longwood Gardens  
Meadow

The meadow is lush green, accented with subtle patches of wildflower color which serve as clear foci for the eyes but maybe too subtle for the camera. Most people walk by it without venturing in, but I found it to be a rich, peaceful environment, especially from within. They are missing something by just walking past, but it is very hot and I can't blame them.. A group of fifteen or twenty people on a nature walk further in become tiny to my view from the opposite edge. Here alone, in the meadow, does the garden unfold to reveal this sense of distance, of prospect with little refuge.<sup>9</sup>

Leaving the meadow behind and stepping onto the lawn, I find it poor in comparison. On a bench in the merciful shade of the woods I hear, instead of the unseen birds, the fountain behind me and the cicadas in the trees above me, again invisible yet with an entirely different sense of place than the meadow.

### **Finishing the East Loop**

The last leg of the East Loop consists of several small garden "rooms" laid out in a fairly formal manner. The Wisteria Garden, not in bloom in July, surges with heavy round vines climbing up square wood posts of arbors dense with lush green foliage. The Peony Garden, in formal beds around a sundial, languishes past its bloom, but leads on to the Square Fountain Garden, where borders full of bright red flowering plants eclipse the out-of season gardens on either side. The dusty white gravel of the walkways crisply frames the floral reds, as the central fountain centripetally pulls the eye in from the edge. A rock wall with stairs leading back up to the flower walk provides a secondary focus. The Rose Arbor, further along the loop, was suffering the Japanese black beetle infestation I had seen elsewhere in Pennsylvania.

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<sup>9</sup> Jay Appleton, *The Experience of Landscape* (London: John Wiley & Sons, 1975).

The last garden on the East Loop is the Theater Garden (figure 5.9), a small walled garden behind the Open Air Theater that began the loop. Designed in 1975 by Thomas Church of the California School of garden design<sup>10</sup> (see chapter three), a quiet, peaceful, meditative spirit reigns here, despite the proximity to the main entrance and the busy Flower Garden Walk. The Theater Garden is an arid garden with a feel of Spain or of the Southwestern United States, populated with desert plants of complex textures. Prickly pear and yucca stand hard and sharp against the soft leaves of nearby lambs ears, while brick walkways continue the arid and tactile character of the garden. Benches and the circular form send out a call to stop, sit, absorb, and rest before continuing on to the conservatories.

### **Gardens Indoors**

The Conservatories are a series of indoor gardens, a far cry from the greenhouse as a warm space in which to grow tender plants on rows of tables. The controlled internal climate permits the growing of plants and the creation of places beyond the limits of the environment outside the doors. Here the idea of garden rooms takes on a more literal meaning, as this huge garden house has many connecting rooms, all furnished differently. Entering the main conservatory, a grand place with doric columns and windows for a roof and for walls, I step into a formal garden that harkens back to the Roman roots of Western gardening (figure 5.10). The form is a peristyle, with the same design found in the remains of Pompeii: a rectangular court surrounded on four sides with a walkway lined with pillars. The space is large, with high pillars perhaps twenty feet tall that support the vaulted glass ceiling rising to great heights above them. Below, flower beds border the two manicured lawns that take up most the floor, while hanging baskets of fuschias are everywhere. Taking the pathway around the edge clearly establishes this as a centripetal garden, prototypical in its form.

<sup>10</sup> Randall and Albee, *Longwood Gardens*.





Figure 5.9  
Longwood Gardens  
Theater Garden



Figure 5.10  
Longwood Gardens Conservatories  
Main Conservatory

The formal stroll along the peripheral colonnades is not so different from the informal English garden with its belt walk around the perimeter of a lake. Although the lines are different, the way we relate to the space is quite similar. In the Exhibition Hall, another peristyle that adjoins the main room to form a “T,” the sunken marble floor glistens with a few inches of reflecting water, and thick, ropy vines twist and climb upon the solid pillars.

In contrast with these expansive peristyle gardens, the bonsai display occupies a small, square, white room that does not detract from the tiny little Japanese gardens. The bonsai sit in shallow containers on a black wooden shelf running waist-high around the room. The room is centrifugal in form, since one stands in the center of the space and looks at the bonsai around the edges, yet it is also centripetal in regard to each individual bonsai, viewed from outside. Unlike the other gardens, the bonsai are not environments one can enter into, except in the imagination; they are *objets d’art*, exquisite pieces considered from the viewpoint of a giant. Adjoining rooms hold ornamental nectarine trees and grape vines, a last reminder of the days when the main conservatories here were used for growing fruit out of season.

The last room on this row is a gem: the Children’s Garden. Winding pathways create a haven in the small room with bright flowers, topiary animals, and fountain jets forming fascinating domes of water that beg to be touched. The garden path is scaled to children, reached by a little white bridge where adults are not allowed (figure 5.11). Vine-covered arches stand less than five feet high, a tunnel and the ruins of a stone cottage make for young adventure, and the twists and turns create the sense of intrigue of a maze. A more adult “Garden Path” winds alongside the row of rooms holding the bonsai, fruit, and Children’s Garden, creating an intimate, overgrown world of its own (figure 5.12).



Figure 5.11  
Longwood Gardens Conservatories  
Children's Conservatory



Figure 5.12  
Longwood Gardens Conservatories  
“Garden Walk”

The end of the garden path winds out into the East Conservatory, a room about the same size as the main conservatory but with softer lines, a sense of bright airiness, and a more contemporary style (figure 5.13). An unusual ceiling of curved, diamond-shaped acrylic panels arches high above a garden of water and lush vegetation in undulating lines. Water birds, sculpted in metal, stand in irregular pools lined with grass and flowers, backdropped with palms, feathery acacia trees, and weeping Kashmir Cypress. Color themes gather the garden, as the flowers in bloom are all yellow or orange and many of the trees have bluish foliage. In other seasons, of course, the colors would be different, moving with time in the garden. This is a place where adults were lingering, often in groups of two or three, and I felt compelled to linger here, as well. One evening I was there it became much more populated as people waited for a bluegrass concert to be held in the adjacent ballroom, a refugee from rain on the terrace outside. The concert series is an additional draw to Longwood gardens, showcasing a variety of musical styles.

### **Lilypads and Tropicals**

I finally drew myself away from the graceful East Conservatory out to the waterlily display in a courtyard of flagstones and circular and rectangular ponds at ground level (figure 5.14). The space has an open feeling as the sky above reaches so much farther than the tallest conservatory ceilings, while the courtyard is also comfortably defined by the conservatory walls all around. Both children and adults betray their enthusiasm for this popular place, especially upon finding the giant “water-platter” lilies. People linger, making good use of the many benches.

The Mediterranean Garden, another indoor conservatory, displays plants from the Mediterranean climate regions in a long, narrow, linear garden, while the Palm House is a square room, of naturalistic design that places the visitor on a walkway



Figure 5.13  
Longwood Gardens Conservatories  
East Conservatory



Figure 5.14  
Longwood Gardens Conservatories  
Lilypad display, in courtyard



“suspended” around the edge, looking down to the ground below and up to the high ceiling (figure 5.15). The Palm House is the extreme of a centripetal garden, as one is always on the edges, directed toward the center. This conservatory garden is an eyeful: it is packed with large, green, tropical plants, including “elephant ears” with leaves about four feet across. Although the planting is very dense, the high ceiling and low floor make it feel spacious as well. Stepping stones on the ground below suggest entry into the garden, but there is no way to get there. Engagement with the garden is not prevented, however, as the immense tropical plants draw attention and interest, reaching out toward those who cannot reach them, and as a little waterfall, barely visible among the palms, reaches out to surround one with its soundscape.

The conservatory tour then takes me past some “growing houses,” typical of greenhouses that are more functional than aesthetic, and on to some more small tropical rooms. First of these is the Cascade Garden (figure 5.16), co-designed by the famous Brazilian artist and designer Roberto Burle Marx. A sign introducing the garden is an explicit statement of its poetics of place:

The Cascade Garden is an artistic expression of elements found naturally in the tropical regions of South America. There, moist air and steamy earth erupt in lush, colorful foliage, filling every conceivable space. In this display, these conditions have been reproduced from an artist’s perspective. Tree trunk-like columns covered with plants rise against the mist. Sheets of water cascade down “earthen” walls. Sweeps of colorful foliage guide the way down the winding “mountain path” amidst masses of tropical air plants clinging to the faces of surrounding “cliffs.”

This text adds another level of awareness to the poetics of the place, bringing certain aspects of the experience into relief to merge conceptual understanding with the more subconscious poetic knowing that arises spontaneously in a response to a place. One poetic emphasized here is the garden as a work of art, both expressed in the words and implied in the similarity with a placard one might find beside a painting in a museum.

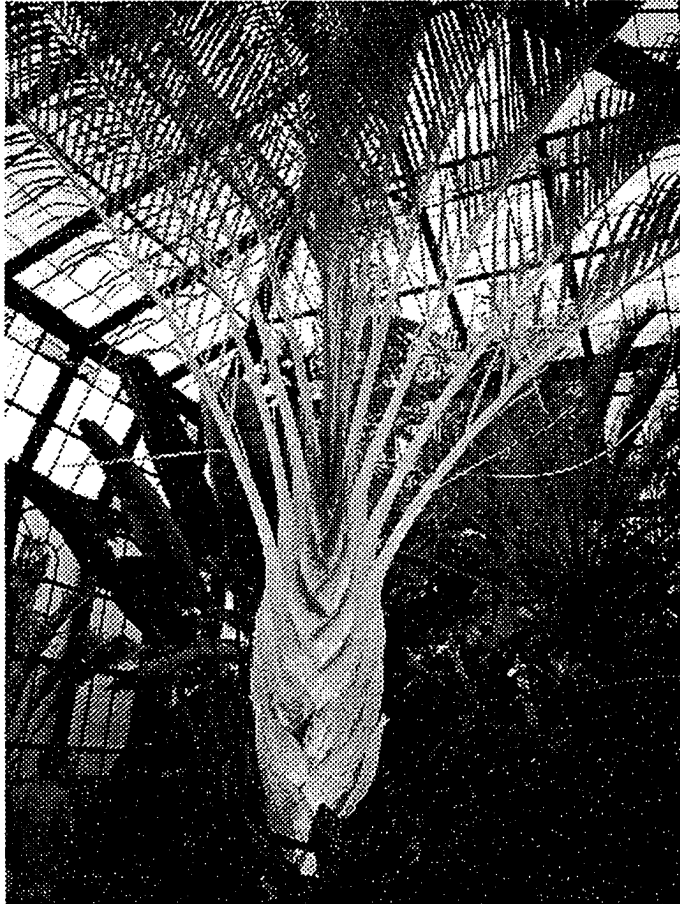


Figure 5.15  
Longwood Gardens Conservatories  
Palm House  
(for scale, see man in lower left corner)



Figure 5.16  
Longwood Gardens Conservatories  
Cascade Garden

The language of the sign evokes images that join with the spirit of place to form a multidimensional poetic making.

Several other tropical conservatory rooms follow. The Fern Passage is a narrow, linear garden of ferns. The Orchid room is a centrifugal garden, in which one stands in the middle to see all the orchids covering the walls. The Tropical Terrace is similar to the Cascade Garden, with an emphasis on epiphytes, plants that grow on the branches of trees and take their sustenance from the air. The sinuous pathway in this garden room makes it seem bigger than it is. The series of tropical conservatories, ending in a small room full of banana plants, accustoms the visitor to the lush, green, larger-than-life tropical plants in all these indoor rooms, so that the transition to the next conservatory is set up for a powerful poetic impact.

### **The Silver Garden**

I emerged from the banana room, with its huge plants and dark green foliage in a canopy crowding overhead, into the Silver Garden, a spacious, airy room of desert plants with white, silver, and gray foliage (figure 5.17). The contrast stuns people into an abrupt poetic pause: as I sat on a rock in this garden, almost every person coming in stopped dead in the doorway and exclaimed, “wow!” The Silver Garden exudes the peace and the solitude of the desert; one woman described it as “refreshing.” Rocks are an important element, as is the abstract-patterned black and gray flagstone walkway. Foliage and rock predominate, with only a few flowers of dusty pastel coloring. A collection of pots adds to the character of the place, which combines textures, color and a variety of levels, horizontal and vertical, in a striking composition that masterfully effects a mood in the people who enter into it. A curving pathway leads through the garden in a linear form that moves the garden past on both sides. The Silver Garden is



Figure 5.17  
Longwood Gardens Conservatories  
Silver Garden

the finale of the conservatory tour, as the way leads back into the main conservatory and out onto the terrace overlooking Longwood's fountain garden.

### **The West Loop**

After sitting on the terrace for a while to rest and to watch the ever-changing patterns in the five acres of fountains in the Main Fountain Garden below (figure 5.18), it is time to embark on the last of the three self-guided tours of Longwood: the West Loop. My first stop is not mentioned in the guide at all: the Fountain Garden Plaza (figure 5.19). The small plaza, enclosed by balustrades and high hedges, with patterned pavement underfoot and a fountain of drinking water in the center, follows the form of a medieval garden. The grotesque heads and grimacing visages ornamenting the fountain reverberate back to the Gothic art of the High Middle Ages that is exemplified by the gargoyles of Notre Dame in Paris. The small, enclosed form with a functional fountain in the center is also medieval in character.

The Hillside Garden, a short walk from the fountain garden, is a delicate garden of shrubs, groundcovers, rocks, flowering perennials, irregular stone pathways, a backdrop of trees higher on the hill, and a small stream that tumbles over the rocks to meet the nearby lake (figure 5.20). In this informal and intimate setting, a walk along the narrow paths brings discoveries of elements unseen until they are happened upon: a rough stone stairway, a little bridge over the stream, or more ways for the foot, concealed within the mélange of flowering shrubs. The discovery of the hidden is one way the garden participates in the novelty of the poetic, as newness keeps emerging to feed the poetic imagination. The ups and downs of the hillside add another, vertical, dimension within the garden, so that there are more directions of movement than a horizontal plane allows.

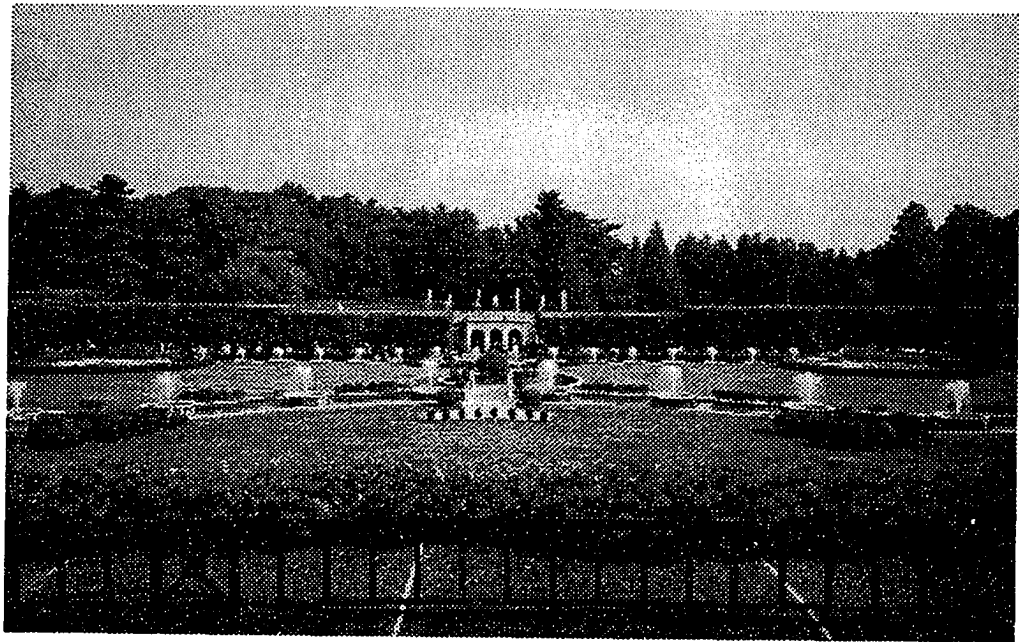


Figure 5.18  
Longwood Gardens  
Main Fountain Garden  
from Conservatory terrace

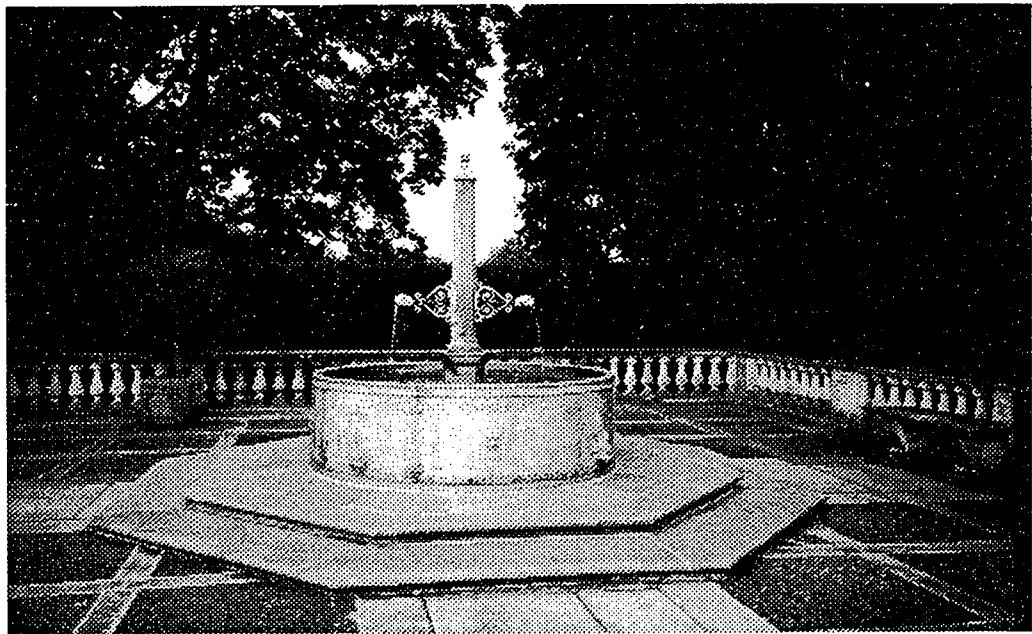


Figure 5.19  
Longwood Gardens  
Fountain Garden Plaza  
Medieval style, with drinking-water fountain



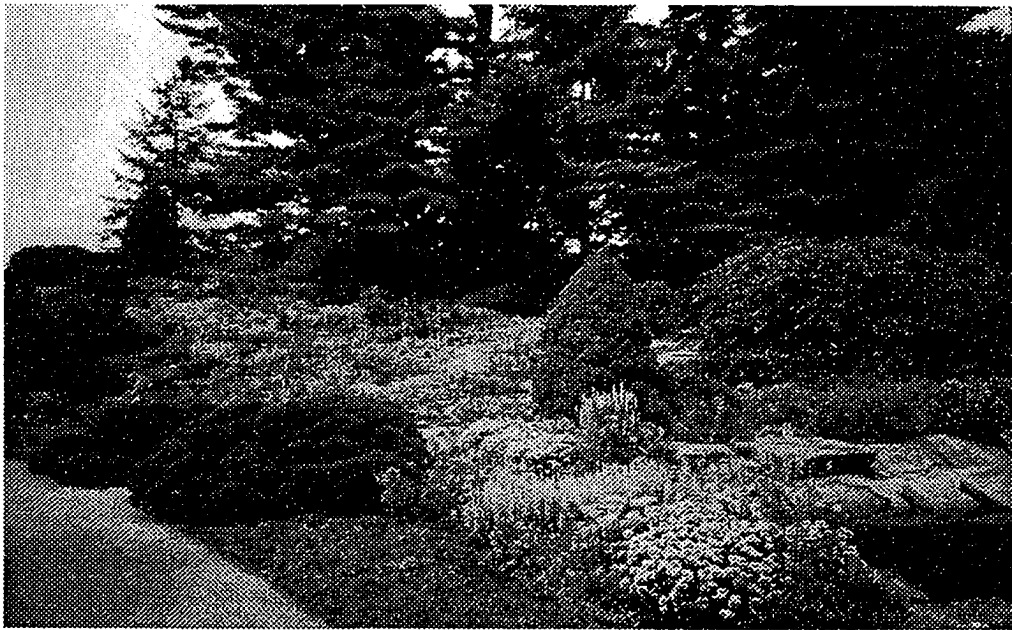


Figure 5.20  
Longwood Gardens  
Hillside Garden

At the foot of the Hillside Garden, the view of the lake beside it comes into focus. A few adirondack chairs scattered on the lawn across the walkway afford an opportunity to sit and take in the picturesque scene (figure 5.21). A waterfall cascades into the far end of the lake, filling the air with booming sounds that are deeper and more visceral than the splashing of the fountains elsewhere in the garden. Rising out of the trees that reflect upon the water is Chimes Tower, a rustic stone edifice with Romanesque arches that finishes the quality of picturesque so desired in eighteenth-century England. As I surrender my chair in the shade, the climb to the top of the tower takes me up a long winding stone staircase that has the feel of a medieval castle. The arched windows reward me with framed views, and the top of the tower yields a prospect across the garden. The tower brings to mind the close association between architecture and the garden throughout the ages.

Further uphill from the tower, in the trees, the rapids above the waterfall lead to an unusual source of water. A square wooden viewing platform frames the “Eye of Water,” an artistic-hydraulic construction like a giant blue eye that acts like a spring, supplying five thousand gallons of water per minute to the rapids and waterfall below (figure 5.22). The Eye of Water was inspired by a similar water feature near San Jose, Costa Rica: the Ojo de Agua. Its surroundings have a Japanese character, with Hinoki Cypress, Cherry Trees, Japanese Maples, and the viewing platform similar to one from a Zen Meditation garden (see figure 4.9).

The continuation of the West Loop leads past the small Rose Garden to the Topiary Garden, which is populated with Japanese Yew clipped into all sorts of shapes: birds, cones, pyramids, and other animals and geometric shapes (figure 5.23). The topiary are large, up to about fifteen feet in height, creating an unusual sense of space. We smaller humans are dwarfed by the giant dwellers of the Topiary Garden. This garden has a strong sense of being “among.”



Figure 5.21  
Longwood Gardens  
Chimes Tower, Lake, and Waterfall



Figure 5.22  
Longwood Gardens  
“Eye of Water”



Figure 5.23  
Longwood Gardens  
Topiary Garden

Adjacent to the Topiary Garden is an allée lined with rose of sharon, a hibiscus trained into tree form and blooming in white, above a lower row of the shrub called “bluebeard.” The center of the allée is a long, narrow band of lawn leading to another “love temple” like the one on the East Loop (figure 5.5), but this one is in a more formal setting, serving as the focal point of the allée. Closer scrutiny reveals that the white pillars of the open, circular temple are carved with grapes and urns, below the iron lacework. While the form of this allée implies a movement down its length to the temple at the end, some contrary cues lead past it instead. First, the allée is unnamed on the map and unmentioned in the guide, implying insignificance. Second, the pavement leading past the end of the allée speaks “this is the way” more strongly than does the grass. The paved pathway is a more certain place to trod, with a clearer call to the movement of the foot, while the grass appears content with the movement of the eye along its length. So while the allée by itself would appear to be a linear garden that one moves through in a line, in context it becomes a centripetal garden that one looks into from the edge.

The Idea Garden, the last garden on the West Loop, is a collection of gardens within itself, drawn together by the common theme of the activity of gardening. The stated purpose of the idea garden is to demonstrate to amateur gardeners plants that do well in southeastern Pennsylvania so that people may take ideas home to their own gardens. Throughout this garden, there are sheets with gardening tips and information on various plants, found in mailboxes labelled “take one.” The Idea Garden thus brings the gardening process to the fore, and the private-to-public character of gardens like Longwood points again to the private. The smell of fertilizer adds another sensory connection to “garden” as a verb.

The idea garden includes sections on annual and perennial flowers (i.e. that bloom in one season or in successive years, respectively), roses, vines, herbs, ground covers, ornamental grasses, vegetables, dwarf fruit trees, berries, and a texture display. Path materials vary throughout--brick, pebbled concrete, lawn, gravel and flagstone, and wood chips--adding to the sensory poetics underfoot and contributing to the creation of each small garden as a place with its own character. Some of the idea gardens are visually enclosed, while others are more open. Below are some images from a few of these idea gardens.

The groundcover garden is formed of rectangles and diagonals that achieve a formal, rational design. The garden as a whole is a rectangle bordered by clipped hedges about five feet high. Within the garden, a large rectangular lawn in the center acts as a canvas for the five rectangular beds within it, each planted with examples of low groundcover plants in parallel diagonals. Borders along the edges of the garden contain similar beds set against grass. The presentation of choices in an orderly manner that allows comparison creates almost a “shopping” feel to this garden .

The garden of ornamental grasses is much more informal. The varying heights of the grasses, from knee-high to tall above the head, gives the garden a fuller dimensionality and a sense of being surrounded by the garden (figure 5.24). While this is a small garden, the rich variety of textures, forms, colors, and heights of the grasses make it seem larger-than-life, and it is more artistically engaging than the groundcover garden.

The herb garden has very different set of textures, with brick lined beds of many different herbs set on a background of gravel walkways edged with gray flagstone. A courtyard-like effect is furthered by a few lone clay pots placed upon the



Figure 5.24  
Longwood Gardens  
Idea Garden  
Ornamental grasses



gray surfaces of the ground. I spotted a rabbit hopping from the cover of one plant to another, a perfect finish to the scene.

While many of the idea gardens boast a variety of colors and textures of foliage, the gardens of annual and perennial flowers leave most of the subtlety behind with masses of colors pushed close together in several beds. Unlike the Flower Garden Walk on the East Loop, these planting are not collected into plots of similar colors but instead display a mix of the range of colors possible using some foliage plants as well as the flowers. In one bed, a clump of ornamental grass with deep purple leaves stands beside a tall perennial shrub with bluish leaves and flaming red flowers, while these two taller plants serve as a backdrop to shorter plants: yellow daisies, a plants with magenta leaves rimmed in gold, puffy orange marigolds, and still more colors around the corner. This display of variety is a microcosm of the gardens of Longwood as a whole, a feast of endless possibilities.

The vegetable garden is framed, but not really enclosed, by a rough, see-through fence made of branches tied together. This is the largest of the Idea gardens, again with a strong sense of gardening. In one corner of the vegetable garden there is a Children's Vegetable Garden (figure 5.25). Creative design makes this a delightful place, with a gardener made out of clay pots, a "maize maze" of tall cornstalks, a scarecrow, and "Kids' Corner," an enclosed place with child-sized table and chairs. Longwood, like the Dallas Botanical Gardens (see chapter four) and most zoological gardens, makes a point of including children. As well as the regular map/guide, there is a "Kids' Map" of the gardens with a guide to points of interest to children. These include the "rainbow of color" on the Flower Garden Walk, the animals and shapes of the Topiary Garden, fairy tale-like Chimes Tower, and of course the children's gardens in the conservatory and in the vegetable garden. The text of the guide gives children



Figure 5.25  
Longwood Gardens  
Idea Garden  
Children's Vegetable Garden

specific things to look for, as well as providing their own colorful map. These features encourage emplacement and engagement on the part of children as well as adults, recognizing that the quality of emplacement will be different for children.

### **Evening at Longwood**

Whereas most public gardens close at dusk, Longwood remains open until after ten o'clock in the evening three days a week during the summer, with special events and entertainment during the evening. After dinner at the restaurant or cafeteria, one can continue to stroll through the gardens or attend a concert on the conservatory terrace until the Festival of Fountains display after dark. One evening I was at Longwood there was a bluegrass concert scheduled for 7:30. I had dinner in the cafeteria and went to walk around the idea garden until the concert. A sudden rainstorm while I was in the garden of ornamental grasses had me dashing back to the conservatory, where the musicians scrambled to move their equipment indoors to the ballroom. After a pleasant wait in the East Conservatory, we had our bluegrass concert indoors. By the time the concert was over the storm had past, freeing us to go back out to the terrace for the fountain display after dark. The second evening I spent at Longwood, a folk concert was scheduled, and this time clear skies permitted it to take place outside on the conservatory terrace. One of the songs performed was based on an Australian Aboriginal "Songline," in which the earth is mythically sung into creation. One line about the earth seemed particularly appropriate to the garden setting and to my theme of the poetics of place: "We are her voice, she is our song."<sup>11</sup>

Evening falls, and the garden takes on new poetics. The conservatories are lit, becoming different places in the night light, and the garden too, with its lights and shadows. The "Illuminated Fountain Display" is a choreography of water, lighting,

<sup>11</sup> Performed by Steve Gillette and Cindy Mangsen, July 28, 1998.

and classical music, all managed by computer. To the music of Prokofiev or Rachmaninoff (the two evenings I was there), the fountains danced in different combinations, heights, angles, and colored lights against the night sky. One night I watched the display among the audience on the terrace, while the second time I was one of the few people walking down among the fountains during the show. Somehow the fountains seem bigger lit up at night, with deep shadows all around. No sound can be heard but the symphony, the water, and the night insects in hiding.

### A Longwood Twilight

The dusking garden fades away,  
As brightness falls asleep.  
Shape become everything in the dark,  
Shadows more solid than branch, bush, or flower.  
Deep under the trees, blackness creeps and lurks,  
And cicada melodies fill the air.

Fireflies bring stars to earth  
And break grays of dusk.  
White flowers luminesce  
As the sun abandons their colored cousins, to wane.  
The conservatory sparkles from within,  
A diamond in the garden.

As I walk beneath shining lampposts to find again the garden gate, more music floats across the garden: the cast of "Carousel" rehearsing in the Open-Air Theater. I pass through, out again to the parking lot and the world, into night more prosaic than the one I leave behind me, but still a bit poetic as the images of the garden night linger.

### Archetypal Poetics

The places and landscapes of Longwood Gardens exemplify poetics that are not only immediately sensory or experiential, but also that reverberate, in the Bachelardian sense, into the archetypes, or "primordial images" of Earth.<sup>12</sup> Of course there is the

<sup>12</sup> Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, trans. Maria Jolas (Boston: Beacon Press, 1969); Carl G. Jung, "Approaching the Unconscious," in *Man and His Symbols*, ed. Carl G. Jung (New York: Dell Laurel Editions, 1964), 57.

goddess Flora, the garden in bloom, profuse, abundant, and fertile.<sup>13</sup> We find Flora in the Flower Garden Walk, in the bright red Square Fountain Garden, , in the rose gardens, and in the Conservatory where she can burst forth any time of the year. In the woods of Peirce's Park and among the trees in many parts of the garden is the sacred grove, the wildness of the forest, or the mythical tree of life.<sup>14</sup> In the many fountains, streams, pools, and lakes are the waters: the giver of life, blood of the veins of the earth, sacred rivers (Ganges, Tigris and Euphrates, Styx, Nile), oasis in the desert.<sup>15</sup> Stone, too, is scattered everywhere in the garden: the image of the mountain, bones of the earth, the stuff out of which caverns and chasms are made.<sup>16</sup> The stone is in the pathways underfoot; it is the solid under the fluidity of the stream; it is the wall that contains a garden room or defines a solid line.

From another perspective, Aristotle's four elements dance in the garden: the heavy elements, earth and water, reaching toward earth's center, and the lighter elements, air and fire, reaching up and away, together a dynamic poetic.<sup>17</sup> Earth, mother earth, is in the stone and in the soil, in the very ground beneath the foot, the foundation from which all else emerges and the ultimate basis of rest to which all movement relates.<sup>18</sup> Water, besides its hidden role in nurturing plants, owes its abundance in the garden to the fact of its heaviness: it will fall. The falling of water,

<sup>13</sup> Joseph Campbell, *The Masks of God: Occidental Mythology* (New York: Penguin Books, 1964).

<sup>14</sup> Alexander Porteous, *The Lore of the Forest: Myths and Legends* (London: Senate, 1928); Simon Schama, *Landscape and Memory* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1995).

<sup>15</sup> Janet Lembke, *Skinny Dipping and Other Immersions in Water, Myth, and Being Human* (New York: Lyons & Burford, 1994); Bryan Leigh Molyneaux, *The Sacred Earth* (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1995); Schama, *Landscape and Memory*.

<sup>16</sup> Molyneaux, *The Sacred Earth*; Schama, *Landscape and Memory*.

<sup>17</sup> Richard Tarnas, *The Passion of the Western Mind: Understanding the Ideas That Have Shaped Our World View* (New York: Ballantine, 1991).

<sup>18</sup> David Abram, *The Spell of the Sensuous: Perception and Language in a More-Than-Human World*, (New York: Vintage, 1997); Martin Heidegger, "The Origin of the Work of Art" in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, trans. Albert Hofstadter (New York: Harper & Row, 1971).

between air and earth, creates its appeal in fountains, streams, cascades, and waterfalls. Air is the foil against which earth and water rise and fall, the horizon into which a view disappears, the sky that comprises the upper half of a prospect, and the element in which we move and breathe. Fire may seem less relevant to the garden, as we rarely include flame in these landscapes, but fire is light, and therefore this element is the messenger by which the garden brings itself to our eyes. Fire is the golden rays of the sun fanning the colors of the garden into brilliance, and it is the gentle light of the moon and stars upon the garden of the night. The darkness, punctuated by fireflies, shows the meaning of the fire by its absence. The elements, earth, water, air, and fire, poetically create the garden as we encounter it.

Longwood speaks itself into being. Within its being and among its great variety of plants, poetic images, colors, sounds, shapes, forms, and textures, in its archetypal reverberations, in its arching fountains, blooming flowers, endless conservatories, quiet, busy meadow, giant lilypads and terrace concerts, we are in-place, emplaced. Yet to go back to the garden is not to return, but rather to discover anew, as time works its magic of ceaseless change in the garden, so that it is ever an emerging poetic creation.

## **CHAPTER SIX POETIC MUSINGS**

In the spirit of poetic knowledge, I have chosen not to conclude this dissertation in a traditional manner, but instead to close with a collection of musings--reflections of the themes of emplacement, poetics of place, and the garden.

### **The Sensual Garden**

A walk in the garden is like reading a poem: an encounter with poetic images and poetic qualities. Like poems, these places are works of art which people encounter aesthetically. Gardens are slow-paced, multi-sensory places. Just as poetic language differs from functional language, gardens as poetic places draw us into a world a bit apart from our habitual, functional spaces, eliciting an unusual degree of awareness of the world.

As works of art that we can immerse ourselves into, gardens emplace us with/among images that draw us out of habitual not-noticing. The art of the garden--through landscape design, sculpture, horticulture, or architecture--creates poetic images that evoke distant places and times past as well as present locations and immediate engagement. The images of the garden, in its art and in its arts, echo into a wide range of places, times, and moods, creating a sense of novelty that entices human awareness of place. A garden may bring one into a Renaissance Tuscan villa, a Spanish patio, a French Chateau, an English landscape, or a postmodern cityscape. The poetics of the garden also evoke the immediate, present being-here-now, making us pay attention. Engaging with our bodies and with our senses, we are emplaced.

All five senses, plus a few more we don't usually count, contribute to emplacement in the garden. The sense of touch, for example, may be literal, as we reach out the hand to meet soft foliage, or it may be figurative, as the eye caresses the

textures of the garden. Touch is of the foot as well as the hand, carrying us into and through the garden, as surfaces underfoot affect how we relate to the garden space around us. The sense of taste has an ancient place in the garden, where vegetables and herbs are grown for the table. For the eye there is texture, form, and of course color. The sense of smell catches floral fragrances or rich soil, while the ear shares in the songbird's joy. The whole body takes us through, within, beneath, along, among the garden.

### **The Garden Poetic**

In his phenomenological study in *The Poetics of Space*, Gaston Bachelard calls the house "the topography of our intimate being."<sup>1</sup> Considering poetics of place in the garden, what kind of "topography" is the garden? It may be a topography of art or of beauty, but most of all it is a topography of a relationship between human and earth, in the best form that relationship can be imagined. It is a laying-out of an ideal realized, an almost utopian expression of what may be the best in the meeting of nature and culture. The garden is not, however, an image of the earth as is wilderness. It is instead the image of a relationship: earth and humans interacting in the garden.

The relational quality of the garden fits in well with the theme of emplacement, which is also relational, indicating a certain type of relation: one that is intimate and engaged. Of course, ideas and ideals of what is the best form of human-earth relationship have shifted and meandered over time, as the ideals of art and the conceptualization of nature have varied. Throughout, the garden has remained a positive, not quite utopian statement about human-being and earth-being. It is not quite utopian because it remains integrated into real life, as a place created, visited, and enjoyed.

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<sup>1</sup> Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, trans. Maria Jolas (Boston: Beacon Press, 1969), xxxii.



The almost utopian quality of the garden relates to Bachelard's idea of the poetic image as on the margin of reality and unreality. As the imagination becomes engaged or immersed in the garden, the poetic moment is created—or it arises—image by image. It is not simply a matter of taking in, or even participating in, the reality of the garden itself, any more than reading a poem is merely a matter of understanding the words. The experience brings one to new heights (what Bachelard calls “sublimation”), as an ontology of the moment emerges that is as much fantasy as reality. The poetic image seduces one out of the ordinary every-day experience, awakening the spirit to an awareness usually buried under Bachelard's “automatisms” or Coleridge's “lethargy of custom,” the habitual going-through-the-motions of life that is our usual mode of being/doing/knowing.<sup>2</sup> We do not habitually pause to consider the texture of the flooring beneath our feet or the myriad shades of green flying past the rear window. Both poetry and the garden are art forms that invite or entice one away from the non-sensual, anaesthetic mode of being.

A walk in the garden can therefore be like reading a poem, a way of doing that engages us with a world of images and connections. The garden and the poem are wholes, but we experience them by moving through them, one image at a time, or by pausing to absorb whatever captures the imagination along the way. Beyond taking in the experience is Bachelard's sense of participation in the joy of creation: the being of the poem or the garden keeps emerging in our reading, our walking. The next line, the next image around the bend, *becomes* as we join it. In a lifeworld where we are emplaced, I am not separate or detached from that becoming, so I too become. Emplaced, we become, place and I.

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<sup>2</sup> Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, xxxi; Samuel T. Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria*, excerpted in *Poets on Poetry*, ed. Charles Norman, 160.

This “we,” this emplacement or being-in, leads to the radical conclusion of *anima mundi*, the world ensouled. If I am not distinct from the places in which I am, but as emplaced share “being” with world and place, then I cannot reserve for myself the right to a soul, the right to be a self, the right to be a “who” rather than an “it.” The nonjective garden becomes no longer a set of things, but a gathering of selves. Who are the flower, the lake, the garden wall, the tree? The garden comes forward to meet me as I reach out to meet her.

### Poetics and Emplacement: Common Ground

My aim in exploring “poetics of place” as a concept has been to find a pathway to a kind of knowledge substantially different from the analytic, cause-oriented comprehension that has grown out of the Cartesian tradition of mind-body and subject-object dualisms. Poetic knowledge is instead an engaged, involved, embodied being-in: an emplaced existence. “Emplacement” expresses a relational being and knowing that can be recognized once one is free of the paradigm of jectivity. It is ontological in that it concerns an awareness and a nurturing of that state of being. The epistemological aspect of emplacement is addressed in the ideas of apprehending, seeing-with, and poetically “coming to one’s senses.”

Poetics has turned out to be an even more powerful tool for addressing emplacement than I had anticipated. The poetic collage in the second chapter brought forth a number of notions as pertinent to the phenomenology of emplacement as to poetry. The poet’s sense of knowing poetically and reflectively parallels the engaged, nonjective knowing that is part of emplacement in the garden. Poetry as an out-of-the-ordinary speaking that discloses the unnoticed ordinary is the same experiential shift that happens in the garden when its images (or her spirits) apprehend (grab) *us* out of our ordinary not-noticing. The novelty that Coleridge ascribes to poetry is found also

in place, once we are awakened to experience it. A walk through the garden is an ever-emerging newness. An additional sense of novelty is found in the garden as the seasons change. A study of one garden through time would reveal the emergent novelty as the garden changed from day to night, week to week, and season to season. Finally, Bachelard's phenomenology of the poetic image draws in more links between poetry and emplacement, with his ideas of the escape from causality, reverberation, the emergent ontology of the image, the poetic logos, and his revery, which is the same receptivity in poetry or emplacement.

Poetics of place reaches across the entire span of relational, nonjective experience: ontology, epistemology, expression, and conceptualization. First, poetic-being, or what-is-poetic, is an ontological alternative to the subject-object paradigm. Poetic ontology finds us always emplaced, always relating to the places we are being-with. Second, poetic understanding or awareness is an apprehending that knows by staying engaged rather than detaching. This poetic epistemology is a knowing not limited to the rational mind. Third, in poetic expression the identity of the speaker is not limited to the poet, to the interpreter, or even to a human person: the poetic image, found on the page or on the land, can take on its own being and its own voice, the poetic logos. Place speaks for herself. Finally, poetics applies to the aspect of relational, nonjective experience that is conceptualization. For example, the earth may be thought of as a player on the stage in order to escape its reduction to mere scenery. Place as en-spirited can return to the world the soul Descartes stole from her. Places thus find their voice in the poetics of being, knowing, expressing, and conceptualizing.

### **Of Gardens and Spirit**

The garden is good for our spirits, for its spirits of place can nourish us. I do not mean "spirit" in a religious sense, but as something so essential to how we are in-

the-world that it is as necessary as breathing. For “spirit” means “breath,” and to live is to respire. Yet we need not only respiration, but also inspiration, which is where the spirit meets the poetic imagination.

The human spirit is fed by the senses, the land, and the waters. We need to remember to feed this hunger, lest we atrophy in spirit and become uninspired. We need pedestrian places; we need to recognize and appreciate colors and textures; we need to connect to living things—plants and animals but also rocks and water, which have their own spirits; we need to step back from the gray and the mechanical to find the poetry of the earth. The garden is one of the places—one of the emplacing, apprehending, pausing experiences—that can provide this spirit. If we can allow the world to be animated, however, we can find spirit and spirits everywhere around us, and honor ourselves by honoring them.

### **Poetics Beyond the Garden Gate**

While the garden is an appropriate workshop in which to explore the poetics of place and emplacement, the themes considered here do not end with the garden. The frame of mind that brings emplacement into the consciousness of our being-in-place is readily prompted by the experience of the garden, yet we have not heard well the garden’s voice if she does not teach us to seek and find closer connections with the many places in which we live. An appreciation of texture, for example, may be learned in the garden and then used to enrich our experience while driving down the street or sitting in the living room. At a more abstract level, the alternative poetics of being-in-place offers another way of looking at the many faces of the world, in terms of poetic ontology, epistemology, expression, and conceptualization. These poetic ideas raise substantial questions about how we habitually go about our lives, suppressing the vitality of the world around us by sinking again into the comfortable patterns of jective

thinking. Our being-in-the-world need not be as prosaic as it is so often wont to be, and one of the beautiful “blossoms” of the garden is its gift of a chance to learn to be poetic beings, wherever we may be.

### **Straying From Beaten Paths**

Part of the appeal of the encounter with a garden is in straying from the main path, making little discoveries and creating a experience of that garden unlike any other. People have walked this way before, but none has looked at it in just the way I look; none has ever taken my exact route through the place. This is new. The dissertation has been a similar straying from the beaten path, taking ways that a few have gone before, but never in quite the same manner. This is a straying from the pavement of analysis into the pathways of phenomenology. It leaves behind the well-worn trail of “jectivity” to seek hidden walkways that offer different views of the landscape of knowledge. It spurns the prosaic highway for the poetic footpath that wanders much less efficiently across the land. It avoids the regular staircase called “comprehending” for a much more uneven flight of steps called “apprehending” that doesn’t get you to the top as quickly but has more to see along the way. This less travelled road has led to a place where facts have lost their chair on the board of directors, and the spirits of place have taken up the position.

**The Road Not Taken<sup>3</sup>**  
(Robert Frost)

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,  
And sorry I could not travel both  
And be one traveler, long I stood  
And looked down one as far as I could  
To where it bent in the undergrowth;

Then took the other, as just as fair,  
And having perhaps the better claim,  
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;  
Though as for that the passing there  
Had worn them really about the same,

And both that morning equally lay  
In leaves no step had trodden black.  
Oh, I kept the first for another day!  
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,  
I doubted if I should ever come back.

I shall be telling this with a sigh  
Somewhere ages and ages hence:  
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I--  
I took the one less traveled by,  
And that has made all the difference.

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<sup>3</sup> Robert Frost, *Complete Poems of Robert Frost* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1964): 131.

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# **APPENDIX** **LIST OF FIELDWORK GARDENS** **BY REGION AND BY TYPE**

## **Fieldwork Gardens By Region**

(With dates and acreage where available)

### **Brandywine Valley, Pennsylvania and Delaware**

- 1) Longwood; Kennett Square, PA (1906)  
1050 acres (3.5 under glass).
- 2) Winterthur; Winterthur, DE (ca 1889/1929)  
200 acres (total 985 acres)
- 3) Nemours; Wilmington, DE (Brandywine Valley) (1909-1932)  
300 acres
- 4) Brandywine River Museum; Chadds Ford, PA (1971)

### **Metro Philadelphia, Pennsylvania**

- 5) Fairmount Park Horticulture Center, Philadelphia (Exhibition 1876)  
Pine Breeze Villa (ca. 1954), 1.7 acres
- 6) Morris Arboretum, Univ. of Penn., Philadelphia (1887), 92 acres
- 7) Independence Park, Philadelphia  
Franklin Court  
Eighteenth Century Garden  
Liberty Bell Pavilion
- 8) Penn's Landing, Philadelphia (1990's)
- 9) Historic Bartam's Garden; Philadelphia (1728), 45 acres
- 10) Scott Arboretum, Swarthmore College, Swarthmore (1929 ff)
- 11) Henry Foundation, Gladwyne (1947), 50 acres
- 12) Bryn Athyn Cathedral and grounds; Bryn Athyn (Cathedral 1919)

### **Lancaster/Harrisburg region, Pennsylvania**

- 13) Hershey Farm; Strasburg, PA (Lancaster County) ca 1998.
- 14) Hershey Gardens; Hershey PA. ca 1937

### **San Francisco, California**

- 15) Golden Gate Park, San Francisco  
Japanese Tea Garden  
Conservatory of Flowers (1879)  
Dahlia Garden  
Strybing Arboretum and Botanical Gardens (1940), 70 acres
- 16) Yerba Buena Gardens, San Francisco (ca. 1992)
- 17) San Francisco Zoo

#### San Francisco Bay Area: East Bay

- 18) Regional Parks Botanic Garden, Berkeley (1940), 10 acres
- 19) University of California Botanical Garden, Berkeley  
(1890; moved to present location in 1920's), 34 acres
- 20) Lakeside Park Show Gardens, Oakland, 8 acres
- 21) Blake Garden, Berkeley (1920's), 10.9 acres
- 22) Oakland Museum and Gardens (1969) 5 acres
- 23) Morcom Amphitheater of Roses, Oakland
- 24) Berkeley Municipal Rose Garden
- 25) Mormon Temple Gardens, Oakland

#### San Francisco Bay Area: Peninsula & South Bay

- 26) Filoli Gardens, Woodside (1917), 16 acres
- 27) Stanford Shopping Center, Palo Alto
- 28) Allied Arts Guild, Menlo Park
- 29) Guadalupe Gardens, San Jose  
Heritage Rose Garden (1995)
- 30) Municipal Rose Garden, San Jose (1927)
- 31) Rosicrucian Park, Temple, and Egyptian Museum, San Jose (1927)
- 32) ) Overfelt Gardens, San Jose (ca 1959), 33 acres
- 33) The Barnyard (shopping Center), Carmel, 3.5 acres

#### Louisiana

- 34) New Orleans Botanical Garden (ca 1936)
- 35) Longue Vue Gardens, New Orleans (1942), 8 acres
- 36) Live Oak Gardens, New Iberia (1965), 25 acres
- 37) Jungle Gardens, Avery Island (1936), 250 acres
- 38) Hodges Gardens, Many (1956)
- 39) Rosedown Plantation, St. Francisville (ca 1836)
- 40) Zemurray Gardens, Loranger (ca 1928)
- 41) Baton Rouge Zoo
- 42) Audubon Zoological Garden, New Orleans
- 43) Aquarium of the Americas, New Orleans

#### Texas, Oklahoma, Arizona

- 44) Dallas Arboretum and Botanical Garden (1982), 66 acres
- 45) Dallas Zoo
- 46) Fort Worth Botanic Garden (1933), 114 acres  
Japanese Garden (ca 1970)
- 47) Fort Worth Zoo
- 48) Myriad Botanical Gardens, Oklahoma City  
Crystal Bridge (1988)
- 49) Tlaquepaque Center, Sedona, AZ

#### Alabama

- 50) Bellingrath Gardens, Theodore (Mobile) (ca 1928), 65 acres

## Fieldwork Gardens By Type

### Botanical Gardens

- Morris Arboretum (1887)
- Scott Arboretum, Swarthmore College (1929)
- Henry Foundation (1947)
- Hershey Gardens (1937)
- Strybing Arboretum & Botanical Gardens (1940)
- East Bay Regional Parks Botanic Garden (1940)
- U.C. Botanical Garden (1890/1920)
- New Orleans Botanical Garden (ca. 1936)
- Dallas Arboretum and Botanical Garden (former estate)
- Fort Worth Botanic Garden (1933)
- Fort Worth Botanic Garden - Japanese Garden (1970)
- Myriad Botanical Garden (Crystal Bridge 1988)
- Bartram's Garden (1728)

### Zoological Gardens

- San Francisco Zoo
- Audubon Zoo, New Orleans
- Dallas Zoo
- Fort Worth Zoo
- Baton Rouge Zoo

### Gardens in Commercial Spaces

- Penns' Landing (ca. 1990's)
- Hershey Farm (ca. 1998)
- Stanford Shopping Center
- Allied Arts Guild
- The Barnyard
- Tlaquepaque Center, Sedona

### Public Parks

- Fairmount Park, Philadelphia, PA
  - Horticultural Center (from 1876 exhibition)
  - Pine Breeze Villa (Japanese house and garden) (1954)
- Independence Park, Philadelphia, PA
  - (Franklin Ct; Liberty Bell Pavilion; 18th c. garden)
- Golden Gate Park, San Francisco, CA
  - (Japanese Garden; Dahlia Garden; Conservatory)
- Lakeside Park Show Gardens, Oakland, CA
- Overfelt Gardens, San Jose, CA (ca. 1959)
- Morcom Amphitheater of Roses, Oakland, CA
- Berkeley Rose Garden
- Heritage Rose Garden, Guadalupe Gardens, San Jose, CA (1995)
- San Jose Municipal Rose Garden, CA (1927)

**Museums and Sacred Spaces**

Brandywine River Museum, Chadds Ford, PA (1979)  
Bryn Athyn Cathedral, PA (1919)  
Mormon Temple Gardens, Oakland, CA  
Oakland Museum of California (1969)  
Rosicrucian Park and Egyptian Museum, San Jose, CA  
Yerba Buena Gardens & Center for the Arts, San Francisco, CA

**Country Place Era Estates**

Longwood (1906)  
Winterthur (1889/1929)  
Nemours (1909-32)  
Blake Garden (1920's)  
Filoli (1917)  
Bellingrath Gardens (1927)

**Other Private-to-Public Gardens**

Longvue (1942)  
Live Oak Gardens (1965)  
Jungle Gardens, Avery Island (1936)  
Hodges Gardens (1956)  
Rosedown Plantation (1836)  
Zemurray Gardens (ca. 1928)

## VITA

Scott Parker Smiley was born in July, 1962, in Berkeley, California, to Parker and Dorothy Smiley. He grew up in the Montclair district of Oakland, California, and graduated from Skyline High School in 1980. For his first two years as an undergraduate at the University of California at Berkeley, his major was undeclared as he took courses in a wide variety of subjects that interested him, including anthropology, psychology, philosophy, music, computer science, French, astronomy, and geography. As a Junior, he finally declared a major, and in 1984 he received the bachelor of science degree in business administration. The courses in geography, and in particular the study of landscapes and landform analysis, left a lasting impression that would later lead to a change of career.

After several years in the business world, he returned to school to pursue a graduate degree in geography at California State University, Hayward. His interests shifted from geomorphology to humanistic geography and landscape interpretation. In 1994 he received the master of arts degree in geography. His master's thesis, directed by Dr. Christina Kennedy, was entitled "Making Sense Out of Chaos: Landscape Order in Two California Wilderness Areas." He then accepted a Regent's Fellowship at Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, for the doctoral program in geography. He took the opportunity while studying at Louisiana State University under the direction of Dr. Miles Richardson to pursue his interests in phenomenology and existential philosophy in order to apply them to the interpretation of landscape and place. He is currently a candidate for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.


DOCTORAL EXAMINATION AND DISSERTATION REPORT

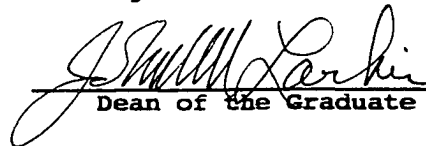
**Candidate:** Scott Parker Smiley

**Major Field:** Geography


**Title of Dissertation:** Musing the Garden: A Poetics of Place  
and Emplacement

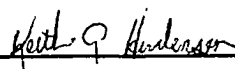
**Approved:**

  
Major Professor and Chairman

  
Dean of the Graduate School

**EXAMINING COMMITTEE:**









**Date of Examination:**

April 19, 1999